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FEBRUARY 28, 2024

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Henley-on-Thames, Berkshire

5 bedrooms | 4 bathrooms | 2 reception rooms | Double garage | South-facing terrace | Garden | Pond | River frontage | EPC E
Freehold | Council Tax band G

A beautiful period property situated on a quiet stretch of the River Thames. The property has lovely gardens with riverside access, a mooring and a separate annexe.

Henley-on-Thames 1 mile | Twyford 4 miles (London Paddington from 35 minutes)

Guide price £2,500,000

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MICHAEL GRAHAM

HARLINGTON, BEDFORDSHIRE

Guide Price: £1,250,000

6 Bedrooms | **4** Reception Rooms | **2** Bathrooms | **N/A** EPC

A Grade II listed country house dating from the late 16th century on a plot of approximately 0.5 acres. The house was remodelled in 1800 and has over 3,575 sq. ft. of accommodation over two floors, including a bedroom which is accessed via a secondary staircase. The property is approached via a gated entrance, and comes with an outbuilding comprising an open barn, two stores and garaging.

Michael Graham Woburn Sands
Richard Tyrrell **01908 586400**

Michael Graham London
Richard Banks **0208 092 1888**

MICHAEL GRAHAM

michaelgraham_living | michaelgraham.co.uk

REF: CBM150118

Ripley, Surrey

6 bedrooms | 6 bathrooms | 5 reception rooms | Gym | Double garage | Car port | Private landscaped gardens | Spring-fed pond
Tennis court | Swimming pool | Approximately 1.37 acres | EPC D | Freehold | Council Tax band H

A substantial 11,000 sq ft early 17th century family home which has been meticulously extended and occupies an enviable position on Send Marsh Village Green.

Clandon 2.5 miles (Waterloo from 54 minutes) | Woking 4 miles (Clapham Junction from 19 minutes & Waterloo from 23 minutes)

Guide price £4,495,000

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Superb sustainable home

Cowfold, West Sussex

Haywards Heath station: 7.5 miles (London Bridge from 42 minutes), Horsham: 8.8 miles

Substantial, eco-friendly house (one of very few country homes with an EPC over 100) offering a wonderful combination of comfort and style. 4 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, 5 en suite bedrooms, study, gym, swimming pool with wet room, separate 2 bedroom annexe, triple garage with EV charging point, landscaped gardens, wildflower meadow, and 9 acre paddock. Freehold | EPC = A | Council Tax Band = TBC

About 11 acres | **Guide £3.975 million**

Rohan Vines

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01444 712 859
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Edward Wain-Heapy

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Impressive village house

Shipston-on-stour, Warwickshire

Moreton-in-Marsh: 3.5 miles, Stratford-upon-Avon: 15 miles, Banbury station: 16 miles (London Paddington from 60 minutes)

Substantial family home constructed in 2012, offering exquisite attention to detail and an ideal location close to the vibrant market towns of Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Norton. 6 reception rooms, principal bedroom suite with dressing room, further 4 en suite bedrooms, further bathroom, kitchen/breakfast room, entrance hall, library, cinema room, indoor swimming pool, triple garage with store room above, 3 terraces, and landscaped gardens. Freehold | EPC = C | Council Tax Band = H

About 1.4 acres | **Guide £4.5 million**

Plum Fenton

Savills London Country Department
020 3582 6901
plum.fenton@savills.com

David Henderson

Savills Stow-on-the-Wold
01451 370 072
david.henderson@savills.com

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Somerset, Corfe

An exceptional opportunity to create a small country estate with 118 acres in the Blackdown Hills AONB

Taunton: 5 miles, Taunton mainline station: 6.4 miles (1 hour 40 mins to London Paddington), M5 (J25): 6 miles, Honiton: 14 miles, Exeter: 31 miles
Planning permission for: Reception hallway | Drawing room | Dining room | Family room | Library/study | Kitchen/breakfast room
Utility room | Boiler room | Cloakroom | Principal bedroom with ensuite bathroom and dressing room | 2 Guest suites with bathrooms
and dressing rooms | 2 Further bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms | Outbuildings | Gardens and grounds | Parkland

About 118 acres

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oliver.custance.baker@struttandparker.com

Richard Speedy
Exeter Office
01392 215 631
richard.speedy@struttandparker.com

REF: STW012309664

Icomb, Gloucestershire

7 bedrooms | 6 bathrooms | 4 reception rooms | 4 bedroom annexe | Barns | Mature gardens with terracing | Large parking area
Approximately 38.63 acres | EPC D | Freehold | Council Tax band A

Corsham Field Farmhouse is a substantial detached home situated in a beautifully elevated position to take advantage of the stunning Cotswold Views.

Stow-on-the-Wold 1.2 miles | Upper Oddington 0.5 miles | Bledington 2 miles

Guide price £2,500,000

Knight Frank Stow-on-the-Wold
leigh.glazebrook@knightfrank.com
01451 600613

REF: POD012341046

Croxton, Cambridgeshire

4 bedrooms | 3 bathrooms | 3 reception rooms | Pond | Meadowland | Garaging | Approximately 3.2 acres | EPC D
Freehold | Council Tax band G

A delightful Grade II listed Tudor manor which has been beautifully restored over the years with immaculate gardens and stunning parkland views.

St Neots 4 miles | Cambridge 13 miles | Stansted Airport 40 miles

Guide price £1,950,000

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REF: STW012005042

Broad Campden, Gloucestershire

5 bedrooms | 2 bathrooms | 3 reception rooms | Double garage | Driveway with parking | Approximately 0.5 acres
Freehold | Council Tax band G

A beautiful Grade II listed period home in a secluded position within the village with mature gardens.

Chipping Campden 1 mile | Blockley 2 miles | Moreton in Marsh 5 miles (London Paddington from 87 minutes)

Guide price £1,625,000

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Historic Grade II* listed manor house

East Grinstead, West Sussex

East Grinstead Station: 3 miles (London Victoria from 56 minutes), Gatwick Airport: 12 miles

Stunning, privately situated country house with Medieval origins, offering potential for development and an extensive complex of associated buildings. 10 reception rooms, 26 bedrooms, 11 bathrooms, great hall, outdoor swimming pool, 2 all-weather tennis courts, sports hall, party barn with office above, further barn, garage, 2 bedroom cottage, walled garden, formal garden, lakes, and woodland.
Freehold | Council Tax Band = H | EPC = E

About 28 acres | **Guide £5.5 million**

Discover more

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Will Peppitt

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wpeppitt@savills.com

NICK SWEENEY

savills

savills | savills.co.uk

Hertfordshire, Nr Royston

Guide Price £2,850,000

An outstanding Grade II listed Country House set in delightful grounds

Royston Station: 4.8 miles (London Kings Cross 37 mins), M11 (J10): 8 miles, Cambridge: 13.9 miles, Stansted airport: 29 miles

Dining room | Sitting room | Study | Drawing room | Kitchen | Breakfast room | Utility | Cellar

Principal bedroom with dressing room and ensuite | 5 Additional bedrooms (1 ensuite) | Family bathroom

Gymnasium | Double garage with car port | Self-contained 2-bedroom cottage

Manicured garden | EPC Rating C

About 4.9 acres

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STRUTT&PARKER
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Berkshire, Old Windsor

Guide Price £3,750,000

An imposing Grade II* listed residence, close to the River Thames and historic Runnymede

M4 (J5): 4 miles, Windsor town centre: 2.5 miles, Ascot High Street: 7.2 miles, Heathrow Airport (T5): 7 miles, Central London: 24.7 miles

Reception hall | Drawing room | Dining room | Sitting room | Study | Octagonal music room | Kitchen/breakfast room
Utility room | Cellars | Principal bedroom suite with dressing room and balcony | 2 Further bedroom suites (1 with dressing room)
5 Further bedrooms | 2 Family bath/shower rooms | Studio apartment | Chalet studio | Double garage | Ornamental bell tower
Tennis court | Swimming pool | Pool house | Established gardens including kitchen garden

About 5.5 acres

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Jo Chadwick
Windsor Office
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jo.chadwick@struttandparker.com

MICHAEL GRAHAM

FAIRFIELD, HERTFORDSHIRE

Price: £1,100,000

A Grade II listed former chapel converted into four contemporary, architect-designed homes. The conversion has successfully combined the original architectural features of the chapel with modern, high specification fixtures and fittings, including motorised conservation rooflights and handmade kitchens. Each property comes with two allocated parking spaces, an electric car charging point, and a share of the approximately 1 acre of grounds.

4 Bedrooms | **1** Reception Rooms | **3** Bathrooms | **TBC** EPC

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A Life-Size Roman Statue
of a Magistrate

Jean-Marie Toulgouat
(1927–2006)

Les Heleniums, 1988 oil on canvas 80 x 80 cms 31½ x 31½ ins

6 March – 5 April

This unique exhibition presents 50 recently released works from the Studio Estate of Jean-Marie Toulgouat – the great-grandson of Claude Monet by marriage. The show navigates through four decades of the artist's life at Giverny, where he was reconstructing its famous gardens and illustrates his transition from meticulous designer to lyrical painter.

By the time the gardens were opened to the world in the 1980s, Toulgouat's paintings had become loose and vibrant reminiscent of the, by then, mature gardens he had helped to create with its rows of irises, tulips, wild poppies, cosmos, nasturtiums, and touch-me-nots. *Catalogue £15 (+£3 p&p)*

This exhibition is to be held in conjunction with 'Jean-Marie Toulgouat: Gardening Giverny', at the Garden Museum, London from 13 March to 24 April 2024.

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COUNTRY LIFE

VOL CCXXII NO 9, FEBRUARY 28, 2024

Miss Elizabeth Charlotte Mary Down

Elizabeth works for a global financial-services firm specialising in crisis management. She is chair of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's Kensington and Chelsea branch and a Land Rover 90 enthusiast. Elizabeth is engaged to Christian St John James, whom she will marry at All Saints Church, Crudwell, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, in August, and is the daughter of Mr and Mrs Julien Down.

Photographed by David Yeo

Contents February 28, 2024

Head's up: Daniel Arsham's *Unearthed Bronze Eroded Melpomene* bursts from the turf at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield

A selection of Britain's most popular dog breeds (Getty)

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From perfect poodles to the loyal and lovable labrador, our dogs are close to our hearts. Victoria Marston reveals the nation's favourite breeds down the decades

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Future Publishing Ltd, 121–141 Westbourne Terrace, Paddington, London W2 6JR
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Joined-up farming

BRITISH farmers must be taking heart from their Continental counterparts, who appear to have scored a striking victory against a too-prescriptive EU diktat to take up to 7% of their landholdings out of production. The Green Deal, which included reducing fertiliser and pesticide use and increasing organic production, all by specific percentages—things that need to happen, of course, but perhaps more incrementally—has been dropped. It was bound to be unpopular against a backdrop of new international trade deals to import cheap food from outside Europe.

Les agriculteurs français revolted with ferocity, forming about 80 tractor blockades on motorways and thus messing up other economic areas. Unsurprisingly, it's been suggested that British farmers might copy them and, only last week, a group jammed the A48 in Carmarthenshire, Wales, with 100 tractors in protest against a Welsh government proposal that they should take about 20% of their land holdings out of production for tree planting and rewilding.

Again unsurprisingly, Labour and Conservative politicians are now rushing to appease the industry and ward off a potential spraying of Whitehall with slurry (*Agromenes*, *page 35*). Last week, Rishi Sunak, whose North Yorkshire constituency is a farming one, became the first Prime Minister to address the NFU conference since 2008. He promised to increase grant funding and cut red tape to enable farmers to develop buildings and diversify more easily. Labour also announced plans to ease bureaucracy, on the building of green infrastructure such as solar panels and wind turbines; the party is ruling out a free-for-all right-to-roam policy and indicates that it won't interfere with shooting, a source of income for many farms, although trail hunting looks likely to get the chop.

It may be dawning on MPs that you cannot cut farm production and subsidies while simultaneously importing cheap food and suppressing prices, particularly at a time of global instability. Nor does the rigid mathematical approach work in a country as topographically diverse as the UK, where farming carries a lighter carbon footprint than in many places. The variety of geology and soil type means that one size will never fit all.

What could work—and are working—are the rather tweely named Farmer Clusters promoted by the GWCT backed by Natural England. There are more than 70 of these across the UK, some with 25-plus members, with environmental priorities ranging from horseshoe bats to water catchment. The idea is that the farms are linked, through corridors of hedges, woodland and water, so that no farm is an island, for neither farmers nor Nature thrive in isolation.

PPA Front Cover of the Year 2023

Property Magazine of the Year 2022, Property Press Awards

PPA Magazine Brand of the Year 2019

PPA Front Cover of the Year 2018

British Society of Magazine Editors Columnist of the Year (Special Interest) 2016

British Society of Magazine Editors Scoop of the Year 2015/16

PPA Specialist Consumer Magazine of the Year 2014/15

British Society of Magazine Editors Innovation of the Year 2014/15

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Printed by Walstead UK

Subscription enquiries
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Annunciata Elwes

Something to brighten your day: in the westernmost parts of the UK—down in Cornwall, such as at St Michael's Mount (*above*), or in the North Atlantic Scottish isles—the sun has already started to set after 6pm and won't set before 6pm again until October 27

Seabirds bouncing back

AFTER two years of closure due to the outbreak of avian flu in 2022, the Farne Islands off Northumberland will reopen to visiting boats on March 25. Also known for its grey seal pups (more than 2,000 are born every autumn), the National Nature Reserve archipelago, cared for by the National Trust, is home to an extraordinary gathering of some 200,000 seabirds of 23 species, including about 43,000 pairs of puffin. Sadly, over the past two years, almost 10,000 bird carcasses have been collected by the ranger team, but as the number of disease-hit birds was down 39% in 2023, there is hope that the colony is developing immunity. For the time being, only Inner Farne—where terns dive-bomb beside the medieval St Cuthbert's Chapel and a Victorian lighthouse—will open for boat landings.

'It seems that the disease has declined in our birds, although we will continue to closely monitor them as the breeding season starts again,' explains Sophia Jackson, area ranger for the National Trust. 'We continue to work closely with statutory agencies and other organisations, such as the British Trust for Ornithology and RSPB, to ensure we are across the latest research and updates.' Before this bout of bird flu, some 45,000 people visited the Farne Islands every year.

The Farne Islands are home to puffins (*left*) and Arctic terns (*above*)

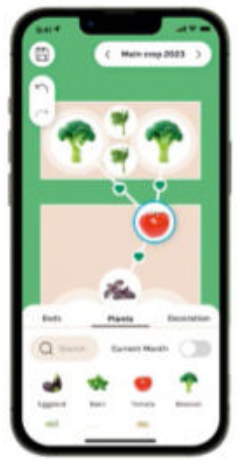
Foundations: John Rylands Library in Manchester, the birthplace of Historic Buildings & Places

Humble heritage

HISTORIC Buildings & Places, formerly the Ancient Monuments Society, is 100 years old this year. Among the six National Amenity Societies, only the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), founded in 1877, predates it. It is unique among these six organisations—which by law must be consulted on plans to demolish, alter or extend historic buildings—in that its interest is not confined to any one building type or period. It also prides itself on looking out for what has been termed 'humble heritage' and scrutinising conservation areas and Grade II-listed buildings that often slip through the net.

Its diversity of interests can be inferred from recent articles in its member magazine, from steam-powered water-pumping stations to triumphal arches. The society argues that such a range gives it an unrivalled overview of trends in conservation across the country. 'It is this that led to the decision in 2021 to change the society's name to ensure it encompasses all our interests, including local and more modern heritage,' explains director Liz Power. Outlining chief challenges lying ahead, she adds: 'Sustained local government budget cuts over the past decade have undermined the capacity of many council departments to manage development and conservation issues. This has placed ever greater burdens on the role of amenity societies to campaign to protect threatened historic buildings and to promote their sustainable reuse, rather than let them face demolition.' *Jack Watkins*

Help to grow



THE most popular gardening app in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands has been launched in the UK. Fryd, which means 'joy' in Danish, helps its 200,000 (and counting) users plan their vegetable plots in a sustainable and eco-friendly way, based on climate and location, and interact with other gardeners. With digital garden beds, it also provides access to its crowd-sourced plant library, offering advice and prompts on the best sowing or planting times, companion plants and crops to avoid. Guidance comes from experts such as no-dig pioneer Charles Dowding, botanist and journalist Becky Searle and urban gardener Alessandro Vitale.

'I've been transforming a little 40 square metre (48sq ft) plot in London into a lush urban oasis,' explains Mr Vitale. 'I switched from one gardening app to another, each providing only a portion of the knowledge I desired. Then, Fryd joined the scene. It changes everything with its vast compilation of plant knowledge, timely sowing schedules and innovative treatments for pests and diseases. I suddenly had all of the answers I needed.' It's free to join the Fryd app community, but for enhanced features, users can sign up to Super Fryd for £9 a month, £35 a year or £130 lifetime subscription.

Good week for

Campus credentials
Lancaster University has been named one of the leading wildlife-friendly universities in the UK for its wildlife-protection policies, funding for local wildlife causes and biodiversity

Working hounds
Anglezarke and President, two Studbrook Harriers from the Holcombe Harriers trail-hunting pack in Lancashire, will be the first working hounds to be judged at Crufts (March 7–10) in the event's 133-year history

Wood intentions
Plans to develop the UK's largest timber neighbourhood in Lewes, East Sussex, have been approved. The development will consist of 685 homes, gardens and community buildings solely powered by renewable energy

Lost property
A Highland Games trophy missing for almost 90 years has been found in Axminster, Devon, 585 miles away from where the competition was held in Moray, Scotland

Bad week for

Getting duped
A 280-million-year-old fossil, discovered in 1931 and believed to be a rare preservation of the soft tissue of a reptile, has been revealed as 'just black paint' on a carved, lizard-shaped rock surface

Damage downstream
Samples taken by WildFish have found the number of invertebrates in the River Rothay—one of the biggest feeding into Windermere—declines by almost two thirds downstream of a sewage treatment works

Snorers
One in four people are 'less attracted' to their partner if they cause a bad night's sleep, finds sleep specialist Woolroom

Squirrel nuts
Defra is exploring grey-squirrel population control methods, which include contraception and gene-editing technology to ensure they only give birth to one sex, limiting reproduction **AEW**

The garden that keeps on giving

THE painter Jean-Marie Toulgouat is responsible for safeguarding and restoring the legacy of Monet's studio and gardens at Giverny in France, where, as the artist's great-grandson by marriage, he grew up in the 1930s and played as a child among a wider collection of Impressionist works by the likes of Pissarro, Manet, Cézanne and Renoir. Toulgouat's paintings produced here during the latter decades of his life are in his own distinctive style, albeit part of the Giverny legacy.

From March 13–April 24, his paintings of Monet's garden (including *Le Jardin de ma Grande-mere*, 1994, *left*) will form a selling exhibition at the Garden Museum, London SE1 (www.gardenmuseum.org.uk). 'Jean-Marie Toulgouat: Gardening Giverny' is presented in collaboration with David Messum Fine Art, St James's, SW1, where, concurrently, an exhibition of newly discovered works by Toulgouat will run from March 6–April 4 (www.messums.com). Both shows are part of a worldwide celebration of the 150th-anniversary of Impressionism, with exhibitions at the Musées d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie in Paris, the Dallas Museum of Art, US, Tokyo Met, Japan, and the Royal Academy in London (for more, see the April 3 issue of COUNTRY LIFE).

Making an Impression

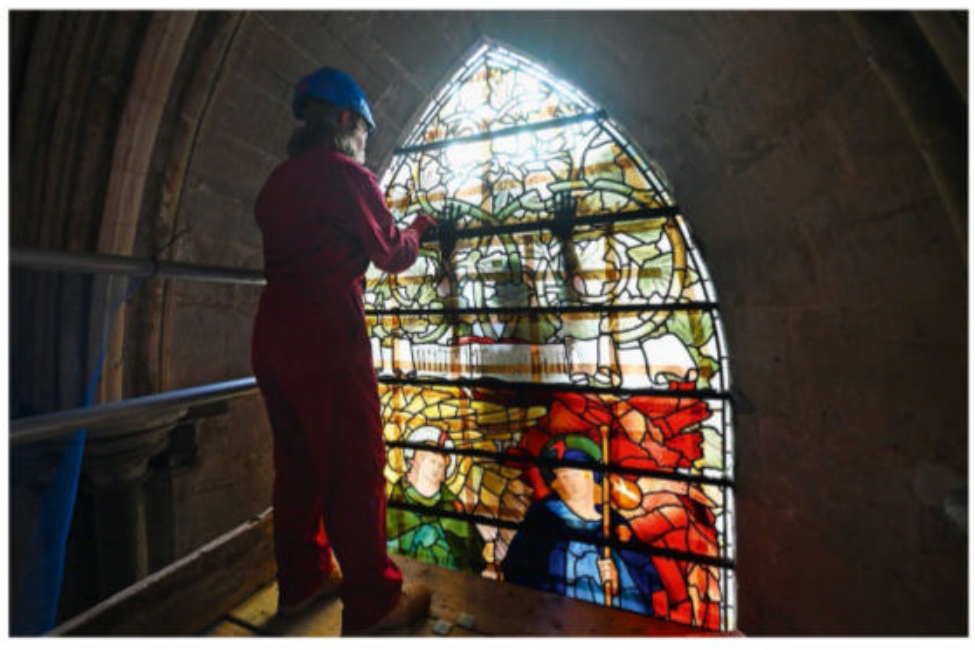
In an unusual tangent, Sotheby's has created a candle with British perfumer Lyn Harris, inspired by the Monet painting *Impression Soleil Levant* (1872)—which featured in the first ever Impressionist exhibition and inspired the movement's name. SUNRISE (*right*) is available to purchase at Sotheby's from today until March 7 (£180), the day after the artist's *Arbres au bord de l'eau, printemps à Giverny* (1885) goes under the hammer (estimate £5 million–£7 million).

On the side of the angels

WHEN, 145 years ago, Sir Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris's stained-glass window was unveiled at Salisbury Cathedral in Wiltshire, it was not received favourably and what should have been a commission for a series of windows was swiftly reduced to just the one. *Angeli Ministrantes* and *Angeli Laudantes* (Angels Ministering and Praising) is now considered a pre-Raphaelite treasure and, last week, experts began the heart-in-mouth task of chipping away at the cement and removing the copper ties holding it in place, before removing it, cracking leadwork and all, from the frame in 6ft by 4ft sections to be taken away for restoration.

'Despite their solid appearance, stained-glass sections of this size can be fragile, and it is always a relief to get them into the workshop. They are also incredibly heavy (about 40kg per section),' explains head glazier Sam Kelly. 'Exposure to the elements, especially condensation internally caused by ancient heaters in the cathedral (which have now been replaced) and water ingress have taken their toll. Painted details, especially on the faces and robes of the angels, have faded over time… and the colours and patterns have been dulled by layers of accumulated dirt.'

Mr Kelly and his team, from their on-site workshop, expect the job of cleaning the glass and adding painted and fired backing glass to replace lost detail based on Burne-Jones's chalk drawings, as well as ensuring the original artwork is not altered, to take the best part of two years. Protective glazing and oak frames should shield the window against future deterioration. The restoration of Burne-Jones's 'four colossal and sublime figures of Angels' (for which he charged £80), as described in the 1878 Morris and Co account book, surrounded by Morris's acanthus-leaf design, is expected to cost £120,000. About half that has been raised due to The Dulverton Trust and others and the cathedral is seeking donations (www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/discover/conservation-and-restoration/burne-jones).



Glazier Kate Kersey prepares to remove part of *Angeli Ministrantes*

A shot in the dark: lighting is directed downwards at South Farm, Hawnby

It takes a village

INHABITANTS of Hawnby, near Helmsley in North Yorkshire—population 193 at the last count—which is owned by Mexborough Estates, have got together to ensure their small village becomes the first to be dark-skies friendly in the North York Moors National Park. Unlike other neighbourhoods that have recently made similar efforts to adapt street lighting—such as Powys, named Wales's first dark-sky community last month—in Hawnby, this transformation has also involved converting more than 100 external lights on 30 properties, including the village hall and the popular Owl Inn. Sometimes, this was a case of merely switching bulbs to warm white or changing the angle of lights, which, in resident Tom Storrar's opinion, has the added benefit of increasing security. 'Light is only directed downwards on the areas that need to be lit up rather than blasting a bright glare,' he says. 'As your eyes are no longer blinded by inappropriate flood lights, you are more likely to be able to see an intruder.' At least 60% of the village's external lighting needed to comply with criteria set out by the National Park's Dark Skies Friendly scheme, and there also had to be a commitment to host events such as stargazing evenings each year. Currently, only 5% of British people are able to enjoy a truly dark, starry night sky (COUNTRY LIFE, *February 7*).

'When driving towards Hawnby from the Helmsley direction, I used to notice how the village glowed in the night sky,' recounts architect and Hawnby resident Paul Smith. 'Now, this is no longer the case. We've also seen and heard more owls in the meadow near the house where there are 30 fairly mature trees… which probably means they are more confident to fly closer to the village.'

'We'd urge people to visit Hawnby and see how achievable it is... this is not about being anti-light, but using lighting in a more targeted way,' explains Mike Hawtin, the Park's Dark Skies lead officer. 'There are already some hamlets and villages, particularly those with few streetlights, that are likely to meet the eligibility criteria for dark-skies-friendly status. However, by recognising whole community efforts within the scheme, we hope it will encourage more bodies, such as parish councils, to work with residents and businesses to make lighting improvements.'

The COUNTRY LIFE Podcast launched in November and is now in full swing, with new episodes out every Monday. This week, writer and academic Fiona Stafford (*Books, February 21*), a professor of English at Oxford, joins us to talk about the fascinating ways in which the landscape of Britain changes over time. Listen at www.countrylife.co.uk/podcast or wherever you get your podcasts.

Country Mouse

In thrall to Nature's power

SOMETIMES, when life takes an unexpected turn and you find yourself having to alter much of what you thought would never change, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Yet, as I navigate a new path and all the challenges that brings, I have been reminded of Nature's peerless strength and the fact that, although there might be difficult days ahead, our countryside—and the flora and fauna that abounds in it—has an incredible ability to keep bouncing back, no matter what it faces.

Indeed, despite this being one of the wettest and warmest winters on record—scientists say they've become 1°C milder and 15% wetter over the past century—the snowdrops and primroses that punctuate the perimeter of my garden have thrust their way up through the sodden earth, where they will soon be joined by a host of cheerful, nodding daffodils. The delicate cherry plum has burst into blossom, casting a fine sprinkling of cream-coloured petals over the saturated soil, and clouds of snow-white blackthorn flowers now adorn the hedgerows.

Then, one evening last week, during a dramatic sunset when the sky turned a deep fuchsia pink, I realised that the birds—no doubt happy at not being rained on at that precise moment—were singing at such a volume that they know, too, that spring is not that far away. **PL**

Town Mouse

Oranges and architecture

FOR a blissful few days of half-term last week, the family escaped to Seville. The rain followed, but it didn't matter. Between the showers, we walked the maze of streets, hired bicycles and even rowed a tiny boat on the canal that runs around the astonishing architectural fantasy of the Plaza de España. Oranges glowed exotically from the trees and, when crushed on the pavements, lent sweetness to the air. It all felt a refreshingly long way from London and impending exams. Consequently, aside from the purchase of churros and ice creams in Spanish, there was no revision done.

The most popular event of the holiday was a flamenco performance, but the cathedral and the Alcazar were acknowledged to be interesting. Even if not enthusiastically entered into, two day trips—one to Italica (its massive, ruined Roman amphitheatre vividly evoking the realities and scale of Roman games and gladiatorial combat) and another to Córdoba—were unexpectedly successful. At the latter, the cathedral mosque interior with its architectural forest of arches and columns amazed us all. Nevertheless, appreciation was strictly time-limited to 'three circuits of the building'. Fortunately, the interior was quite crowded enough for Town Mouse to slip aside and get a little—if not quite enough—extra time before being rediscovered and forcibly extracted. **JG**

Joe Daniel Price/Getty; National Trust Images/Joe Cornish; Vitaliy Kaplin/Shutterstock; Will Pryce/Country Life/Future PLC; Getty; Alamy; Courtesy David Messum Fine Art; Finnbarr Webster

Town & Country Notebook

Edited by Victoria Marston

Quiz of the week

1) What type of bird is a pintail?
2) In Morse code, what letter is represented by three dots?
3) Who starred as James Bond in *Moonraker*?
4) What gives red blood cells their colour?
5) What were the first names of British author G. K. Chesterton?

Riddle me this

I can finish a book without finishing a sentence—where am I?

100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE March 1, 1924

PHOTOGRAPHING whooper swans from a rowing boat in an icy wind on the Broads is an exciting sport, and means a reckless waste of plates. The first thing is to locate the swans, and then row to windward and bear down upon them. They must rise into the wind, and this first rise is sometimes your only chance of getting a photograph that counts. Possibly the birds may wheel back again; but once on the wing, they go down the wind with all possible speed, and are a mile away while one's frozen fingers are fumbling with the camera. Then the chase begins all over again. Much, too, depends on the skill of the boatman, who must manoeuvre the boat so the swans as they pass are headed away from the sun.

1) Duck 2) S 3) Sir Roger Moore 4) Haemoglobin 5) Gilbert Keith Riddle me this: Prison

Cabinet of curiosities by David Profumo

Leopard-skin rug

YES, it *is* a colonial-era trophy and I'm well aware that not everybody shares my penchant for antique taxidermy, but this Indian leopard-skin rug (about 1900, possibly by Kalloo and Son) is a fine, exceptionally large specimen of *Panthera pardus fusca*, despite having dental damage to its 'ridged snarl' and a maculate eyeball. At just under 8ft from nose to tail, this was a heavy adult male, its skin darkly rosetted against a pale-golden ground, which suggests a rainforest provenance (the desert denizens tend to be paler).

One of India's four leopard subspecies, these solitary predators are naturally now protected and their habitat is threatened by urbanisation. They are among the most agile of the Big Cats—lither than the Bengal tiger and more fearless of humans. Wondrously well camouflaged when at daytime rest in trees (which they can descend head first), this leopard is a vocally quite silent nocturnal carnivore, capable of speeds exceeding 30mph.

A hunter of every prey from porcupines to peafowl, it has a particular appetite for livestock and domestic dogs. A few become man-eaters. This one may have been intended as a prayer-mat: it remains magnificent in death, even a century later.

Follow David on Instagram @david_profumo

Time to buy

Isle of Mull shortbread tins, from £7.77, Island Bakery (01688 302223; www.islandbakery.scot)

Hand-embroidered pet portrait, from £45, Bethany Duffy Embroidery (www.bethanyduffyembroidery.com)

On this day...

February 28, 1975

The worst peacetime accident on the London Underground occurred when a Northern City Line train from Drayton Park failed to stop at Moorgate, instead hitting the concrete wall at the end of the tunnel. The six-day rescue operation involved 1,324 firefighters. Forty-three people died, 74 more were injured.

A novel note

'"Are you a reader, son?" he asked early. "Yes, sir." "That's good. A heap of books is the only foundation a man needs"'

Work Like Any Other, **Virginia Reeves**

Poet's corner

'The tree crashes downward: it shakes all its neighbours throughout, And two hundred years' steady growth has been ended in less than two hours'

Throwing a Tree, New Forest, **Thomas Hardy**

Glyn Satterley/Country Life Picture Library; Getty; Chuhail/Dreamstime.com; Alamy; *Four in a Bed*, Alfred Duke; Annabelle King/Future Plc

In the spotlight

Peacock butterfly *(Aglais io)*

SOON, the peacock butterfly, having dozed somewhere quiet all winter, will awaken from its slumbers and head off into the great outdoors. Peacocks are unusual among our butterflies for hibernating, re-emerging in late winter and spring if small rodents haven't found them first.

Fortunately, there are plenty of flowers about for breaking the fast: hyacinths and muscari are a favourite among early roving butterflies, as are the masses of primroses and emerging flowers on willow. *Erysimum* 'Bowles's Mauve', which flowers in every month of the year in the South, is another useful pitstop and will soon be augmented by aubrieta, pasque flowers and much else besides.

Aglais io is unmistakable, having the trademark eyespots on the wings, fairly compared to those on a true peacock's tail. Rimmed with black and set against a scarlet background, they are a wonderful scare tactic, should the butterfly feel threatened by the approach of a predator. Research confirms that the eye spots at least buy time for it, confusing or even intimidating long enough for the peacock to make a quick exit—and live another day.

Unmissable events

Last chance

Until March 15 'Man's Best Friend' (*pictured*), Broadway Museum & Art Gallery, Worcestershire. Selling exhibition of dogs in paintings and sculpture, from the 18th century to today (01386 859047; www.broadwaymuseum.org.uk)

March 7–10 Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, various venues, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. Celebration of new cinema and the artist's moving image (www.bfmaf.org)

March 16–24 The Oxford Literary Festival, various venues, Oxfordshire. With Nature writers and speakers including Sarah Sands on hedgehogs, Nick Penny on kingfishers and 'guerilla rewilder' Derek Gow on wolves (0333 666 3366; www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org)

March 24–June 2 The Great British Dog Walk, various locations nationwide. Series of 12 walks raising funds for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, from Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire, to Bodiam in East Sussex and Balmoral, Aberdeenshire (01844 348100; www.hearingdogs.org.uk)

April 6–7 Cornwall Garden Society Spring Flower Show, Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge. The 'Chelsea of the West' offers an immersive show garden, a grow-your-own space, talks and more (www.cornwallgardensociety.org.uk)

Wine o'clock

Jasmine and spring flowers

Waitrose, Loved & Found Carignan Blanc, Languedoc, France, 2022. £8.99, Waitrose, alc 13%

An intriguing wine made from the rare Carignan Blanc variety, which is native to southern France, from 30-year-old vines on limestone and granite soils. Creamy and sweet-fruited on the nose, showing vanilla, peach and honeysuckle. There's a decent weight to the palate, too, which is perfumed and fragrant, with jasmine and spring flowers followed by a lean, stony finish.

Visit www.decanter.com

Time for tea

Chamomile

I was sceptical about the sleep-inducing abilities of chamomile until I spent an hour one evening in June shovelling fresh-cut flowers into the dryer. The next morning, I was fully restored after a coma-like sleep, induced by breathing the chamomile vapours. It could be argued that breathing the aroma of teas and infusions is an essential part of the taste experience, often overlooked when we discuss tea qualities. Chamomile was a surprise, as it grew with an intensity of flavour in Cornwall despite flowering in June, rather than April, as in Croatia. To grow it this spring, search online for English-grown German chamomile (*Matricaria*) seeds—10g is enough for a few square feet. Although the flowers yield the most flavour, there is an attractive taste in the stalks.

How to serve

In the evening, infuse a few grams in a pot for one at 80°C. The aroma is summery and hay-like, the effect may be soothing and sleepy.

Where to buy

It is available in all good tea retailers, both in teabags and loose, from £5.

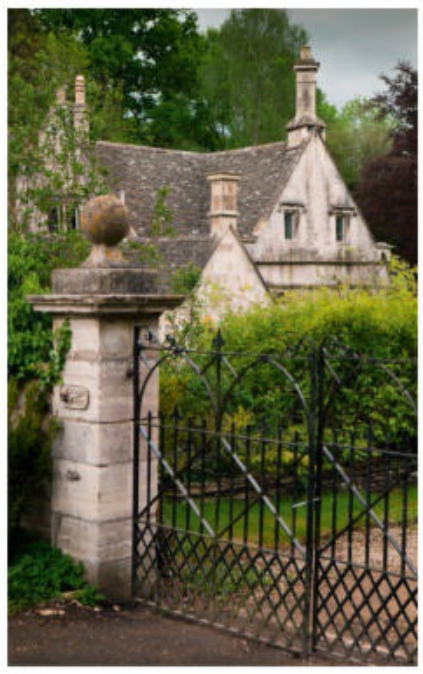
Jonathon Jones discovers teas from around the world, finds new flavours and cultivation techniques, and takes English tea to Asia

Letters to the Editor

Mark Hedges

Letter of the week

Doffing the cap



I WAS fascinated to read your recent article on headwear and your reference to the Act of Parliament of 1571 (*'In the hat of the moment'*, *February 14*).

My childhood home was Capp Mill (*right*), an old mill house in Slad Valley, Gloucestershire, that made cloth specifically for the caps that had to be worn on Sundays in order to promote the wool trade. My love of hats and history has remained with me, for now I am a private tour guide with a particular passion for sharing our heritage shops with clients. Frequently I will take clients to Lock & Co and, only last week, a client bought a glorious hat for her daughter's wedding. When I expressed surprise as I hadn't realised her daughter was engaged, she gaily replied: 'Oh, she isn't, but she will be one day and then I will have the perfect hat!'

Sally Strange, Surrey

The writer of the letter of the week will win a bottle of Pol Roger Brut Réserve Champagne

Venetian splendour

THANK you for the excellent piece about John Singer Sargent (*'More than a pretty face'*, *February 14*). It was a bit of a tease to mention his wonderful Venice watercolours without illustrating one. Here's my favourite, *Scuola di San Rocco*; the way he turns some splodges of colour into believable water and a building is breathtaking. I'm afraid that I don't know who owns this painting, but showing your readers one of his works might put them out of their misery. *Tony Garrett, by email*

Faith is a true comfort

IN response to Simon Jenkins, we have just launched a campaign to raise at least £350,000 to revitalise our Victorian Christ Church in Henton, Somerset (*Letters*, *February 7*). Obtaining a Faculty from the Diocesan Advisory Committee was delayed and we were frustrated by procrastination and the dire response time to our correspondence. Our inability to launch the project meant that new people arriving in the parish over the past few years saw a dull, dark, slightly dank building, not attractive enough for them to want to attend anything other than the major festival services. However, we have had a surprising response from people who never come to the church, saying that it would be a tragedy if the building was allowed to go to ruin. Our vicar, PCC and 12 faithful members of the congregation are determined to make it happen and to create a community venue for many activities. *Rosie Inge, Somerset*

Safety measures

MY late father, a City solicitor, and a lawyer friend of his rode a motor scooter to the railway station. Following the 1973 law dictating the wearing of helmets, their headgear (bowlers) remained unchanged. If it rained, the pillion erected his umbrella and the local bobby only took on winnable battles. The hat now resides in its original 1935 Scotts box (*right*). *Dr T. C. B. Dehn, Berkshire*

Priorities

MY husband allowed me to carry his grandmother's whip, inscribed 1905, on two occasions this season. She was Lady Nall, née Francklin (died 1963), and is pictured third right in this pre-First World War photograph. It was clearly spelled out to me that the order of value was: the horse, then The Whip and, trailing last... me!

All returned home safely on both occasions.

Lady Helen Nall, Nottinghamshire

Alamy

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(photographs welcome)

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COUNTRY LIFE, ISSN 0045-8856, is published weekly by Future Publishing Limited, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK. COUNTRY LIFE Subscriptions: For enquiries and orders, email: help@magazinesdirect.com, alternatively from the UK call: 0330 333 1120, overseas call: + 44 330 333 1120 (Lines are open Monday–Saturday, 8am- 6pm GMT excluding Bank Holidays). One-year full subscription rates: 1 Year (51) issues. UK £259; Europe/Eire €513 (delivery 3–5 days); USA $580 (delivery 5–12 days); Rest of World £446 (delivery 5–7 days). Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn NY 11256. US Postmaster: Send address changes to COUNTRY LIFE, Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent WN Shipping USA, 165–15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Subscription records are maintained at Future Publishing Ltd, Rockwood House, 9–16, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 3DH. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent. If you are an active subscriber, you have access to back issues through your iOS or Android devices. You will only be able to access the digital back issues as long as you are an active subscriber. To buy single back issues (print format) visit: magazinesdirect.com ('Single issues' tab) or email: help@magazinesdirect.com For help call: +44(0)330 333 1113. Lines are open Mon- Fri 8.30am-7pm;Sat 10am-3pm UK time. Magazinesdirect.com is owned and operated by Future Publishing Limited. We regret we cannot be liable for the safe custody .or return of any solicited or unsolicited material, whether typescripts, photographs, transparencies, artwork or computer discs. COUNTRY LIFE Picture Library: Articles and images published in this and previous issues are available, subject to copyright, from the COUNTRY LIFE Picture Library: 01252 555090/2/3.

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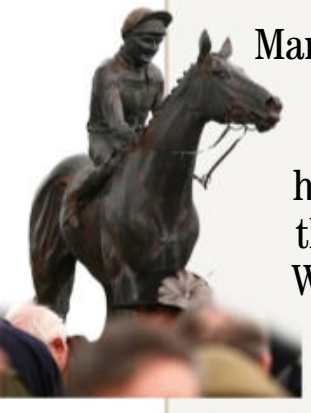
Abiding in God's tent

I WAS struck by Simon Jenkins's correspondence and felt I needed to alert your readers to the possibility of champing (*Letters*, *February 7*). There are about 50 or so churches in the British Isles that are open for champing via the Churches Conservation Trust and I can vouch for it being a unique experience. It gives income to the trust, which helps maintain churches no longer in active use by the Church, and is a very good way of helping the heritage of a village to thrive. Prices for an adult per night are a very reasonable £50 a night on average, with children at half that, bedding is provided and a local host is on hand to explain everything. It's slightly spooky, but great fun. At Stansted Mountfitchet in Essex, my children gave a long sermon from the pulpit on Sunday morning. *Christina Davis*, *London*

COUNTRY LIFE
MARCH 6



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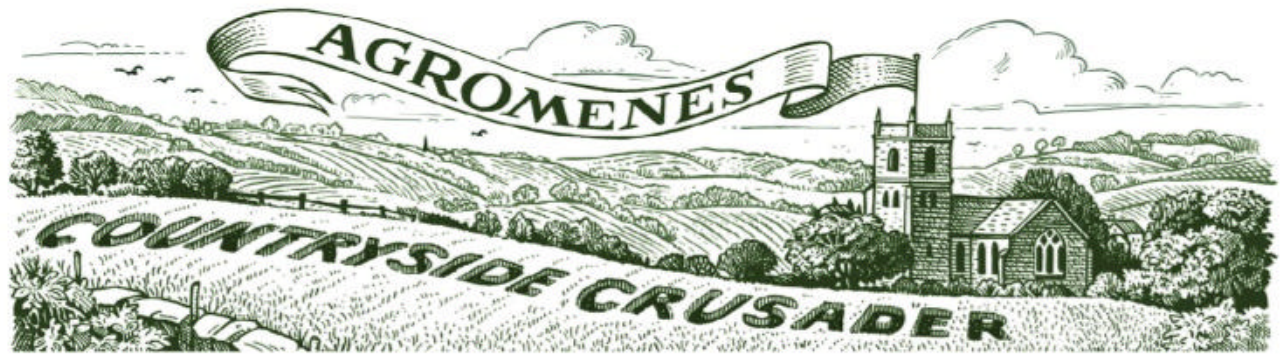

Food comes at a price

THE rain it raineth every day'—Feste's song rang in my ears as, yet again, only the 4x4s could get through from home to the village and we had to reroute our London visitors away from the flooded main road. Worse still was the sight of water pouring off the fields and the lakes forming across them. The grassland was already waterlogged and a neighbour's horses were gathered uncomfortably close together on the one piece of his pasture that wasn't entirely under water. All over the county, the tree-planting campaign spearheaded by volunteers from the Woodland Trust looks doomed, the saplings under water in places where flooding has previously never occurred.

Harvesting has been well-nigh impossible on the waterlogged fields and it's no wonder that potato prices have gone up more than 20% over the past month. Organic farmers are having to redrill fertility crops that have been washed out of the ground. They'll lose much of a grazing season because the crop won't be ready for the sheep until later than expected. Farmers of all kinds look askance at the continuing downpours that make the spring sowing, timed for the end of February, increasingly unlikely.

> 'We ask all this of farmers, but are not prepared to pay the real cost of food production'

The soil is too wet to get the machinery onto it and the weather forecast doesn't cheer. Already, British food processors are discounting their UK-sourced produce, as they believe our farmers will be hard put to maintain supplies if the weather continues to be so wet.

The trouble is that weather-related concerns make alternative sources questionable. Worldwide, February will be the warmest on record and that's after the warmest October, November, December and January. It's a global phenomenon with temperatures of nearly 30°C in Spain and parts of the US simply not having winter at all. This has at last rung alarm bells in Government. Rishi Sunak's measures last week to enhance food security are only the tentative beginning of policies to confront the reality that food choices will be increasingly limited even in comparatively rich countries. Food-price inflation will be a constant issue and the spectre of shortage is becoming a political reality. If that is true for Britain, it is even more true for the poorer nations, where hunger will be an increasing problem and will bring instability and growing migration pressure.

Farmers, faced with all this, are not being paid enough for the food they produce. All over Europe—on the mainland and here in Britain—we are seeing protests that, whatever the proximate reason, are about the fact that all governments have had cheap food policies that make farming ever more unprofitable. Yet ministers are urging farmers to produce more here at home, at the same time as looking after the soil, protecting biodiversity, improving the environment and providing more public access.

We ask all this, but we are not prepared to pay the real cost of food production, through the market or subsidy. If we want these 'public goods', we will have to pay for them and that does not only mean cash to conserve and enhance our precious natural environment. It means paying a proper price for the food we eat. We have grown used to putting every other demand before that basic need. In the 1940s, food consumed roughly 33% of the average income; today it is 12%. Before the Second World War, food security was not an issue; today, it is. The equation is inescapable. Our rich societies will simply have to re-gear and pay the proper price for what is essential to life.

Athena
Cultural Crusader

Our cultural infra-structure needs care

LAST week, amid much publicity, the financial axe fell in bankrupt Birmingham. In order to pay back a central-government loan of £1.25 billion, the city council is to make 50% cuts this year to all its cultural and Arts funding. Next year, there will be no funding at all. This is a body blow in every sphere, from music to museums, and puts at risk an institutional infrastructure that has been developed over many decades.

It could also create unforeseen complications. If, for example, works of art are sold from the city's permanent collections—a course notoriously entered into by Northampton in 2014—we can also look forward to the legal wrangles with donor families over the proceeds. Nor should we forget that this depressing story is likely to be repeated as other cash-strapped councils come to terms with their debts (*Athena*, *September 20, 2023*).

Last week, meanwhile, Historic England announced its most recent round of Everyday Heritage Grants. First launched in 2022, the stated intention of the grants is to 'celebrate working-class histories and the historic places that make up everyday life. The grants are for creative projects that focus on heritage connecting people to historic places, specifically those people and places that are overlooked or under-represented'. In total, 56 projects have received sums, of £6,800 to £25,000, from a total pot of £875,000. They range from an interactive walking trail to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Caribbean Cricket and Social Club in Leicester to a project on the former cardboard city of the homeless next to Waterloo Station, London. The hope is to encourage 'people to engage with their local heritage… to tell their own stories, in their own way, and to connect with others in their local communities'.

> 'Our national bodies urgently need to determine their core priorities'

All credit to Historic England for this initiative, but hearing the announcement in the light of the news from Birmingham did give Athena pause for thought. In times of prosperity, it doesn't matter who spends money on what. If every penny is to count now (and, indeed, if we are to see where the funding shortfalls are), there needs to be a clear, overarching strategy as to the management of public funding for Arts and culture. In the case of Everyday, for example, should this particular initiative fall within the remit of Historic England—which was founded in 1984 as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England with clear responsibilities and is itself quite as old as some of the histories explored in this grants programme—or the National Heritage Lottery Fund? Athena suspects the latter.

We need small, local heritage initiatives, but, at this moment, our national bodies—and the cultural infrastructure they constitute—urgently need to determine their core priorities and pull more than their weight. Otherwise—as Birmingham may discover—short-term cuts could do shocking and disproportionate long-term damage.

The way we were Photographs from the COUNTRY LIFE archive

1923 February 10 Published

Carpenters making gates in the workshop within the western colonnade of Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland. The sea of shavings is testimony to their industry. In 1908, the house had suffered a fire and this image was possibly intended to record the contribution of the estate carpenters in repairing the damage.

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My favourite painting Robert Hardman

The Lion and The Mouse by Peter Paul Rubens and Frans Snyders

***The Lion and The Mouse*, c. 1610–20, oil on canvas, 65¾in by 95½in, by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Frans Snyders (1579–1657), Chequers Court, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire**

Robert Hardman is the author of *Charles III: New King. New Court. The Inside Story* (Macmillan)

‘This is a glorious study of rage, strength, powerlessness and guile that makes me smile, because it encapsulates two great fables. Aesop’s moral: kindness trumps might. The painting hangs at Chequers, the prime-ministerial residence, where I first saw it as a journalist in the John Major era and on later visits. Your first thought: where’s the mouse? Churchill would ask the same question. (Answer: bottom left, barely visible.) Near the end of his final term, as his biographer Andrew Roberts notes, Churchill could stand it no more. He summoned his paintbox and carried on where Rubens left off by touching up the mouse. “If that is not courage,” Lord Mountbatten noted, “I do not know what is!” The Chequers trustees, it is said, were appalled and had Churchill’s handiwork erased. Moral number two: even the king of the geopolitical jungle shall not tamper with an Old Master’

Charlotte Mullins comments on *The Lion and The Mouse*

AESOP’S *The Lion and the Mouse* is a story of power and kindness and was already more than 2,000 years old when Peter Paul Rubens and Frans Snyders decided to join forces and paint it. The lion catches the mouse, but lets her go when she says that one day she will repay his generosity. He is amused—how can a mouse ever help a mighty lion? But some time later, when he is caught in a hunter’s net, the plucky mouse chews through the ropes to free him.

In this painting, the tiny mouse, the colour of bark, is dwarfed by the roaring lion, who strains to pull away from the tree stump that anchors the net. The lion’s own hunting grounds have been transposed to northern Europe and Rubens halos the head with a storm to highlight Snyders’s magnificent beast. Snyders was the leading animal painter in 17th-century Antwerp and he often collaborated with Rubens, painting the snakes on Rubens’s *The Head of Medusa* in 1618. They created multiple copies of this fable together; another example hangs in the Château de Canisy in Normandy, France.

Rubens ran a highly successful studio in Antwerp and, often, his assistants (who included Anthony van Dyck) would complete paintings based on his initial designs. Rubens himself was much in demand at royal courts across Europe, both as an artist and diplomat. He began collaborating with Snyders and other specialist painters following his return from Italy in 1608 as a way of increasing the productivity of his studio.

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And they called it puppy love

Partial to a poodle? Loopy about labradors? Cuckoo for cocker spaniels? You are not alone, says **Victoria Marston**, as she discovers the nation's favourite dog breeds, decade by decade

SET off for a walk around the country lanes and I wager £5 that you can't make it home without spotting at least one labrador and tripping over a cocker spaniel or two (please note that I will not be honouring this bet). Take a turn around town and you will do well not to encounter a French bulldog; it is almost impossible to avoid crossing paths with a poodle-cross of some description.

A nation enchanted by dogs and the prospect of welcoming one (or 101) into our homes for the past century—before this, pet ownership was an unaffordable luxury for most, unless the animals were working dogs—we are also creatures of habit. It would appear that the more we are exposed to a particular breed, be it by family, neighbours or famous faces, the more the idea presents itself that we, too, must own one of these magnificent specimens. Kennel Club (KC) puppy registrations for the past decade bear witness to the fact that we are currently a nation in thrall to the three dogs mentioned above (the poodle crossbreeds are not recorded, but statistics aren't always needed to know something to be true). In fact, the six most popular pooches in the UK today account for more puppies than the other 216 breeds combined—no wonder some of our lesser-known dogs are in danger of falling off the radar entirely.

Looking back over the years, some of the usual modern-day suspects appear in the list of our favourite breeds time and again, but there are also a few more surprising entries. Who would have thought that the wire-haired fox terrier, a dog set to be added to the KC's breeds at risk for the first time in its history, was once Britain's top canine companion?

Top dogs of the 1920s

(*by KC puppy registrations*)

1. Wire-haired fox terrier (61,082)

2. German shepherd (32,824)

3. Airedale terrier (21,783)

‘A dog in a thousand’

IN the first decade in which the KC had significant registration numbers, it was the wire-haired fox terrier that came out on top as Britain’s most-owned dog—despite the fact that, before 1920, the smooth-coated variety had been the more popular. It is widely reported that both Queen Victoria and Edward VII kept one (although there is some debate over the true breed of Edward’s little terrier, Caesar) and it was in 1929 that Tintin’s sidekick Snowy, a pure-white example, was ‘born’. Agatha Christie, whose first novel was published in 1920, dedicated two of her books to her own wire-haired fox terrier, Peter: ‘A dog in a thousand.’ One of these, *Dumb Witness*, even stars a wire-haired named Bob, which aids Poirot in his investigation.

> ‘Small children learnt to toddle aided by a toy fox terrier on wheels’

This ‘friendly, forthcoming and fearless’—according to the breed standard—little dog, ‘keen of expression’ and ‘on tiptoe of expectation at slightest provocation’, remained in the top three in the UK throughout the 1930s and 1940s, with Hollywood darling Skippy, who starred as Asta in ‘The Thin Man’ films, keeping his kind in the spotlight. One of the most successful breeds at Crufts, having won Best in Show three times—in 1962, 1975 and 1978—generations of small children learnt to toddle aided by a toy wire-haired fox terrier on a wheeled frame.

Sadly, none of this has translated into maintained popularity. In 2023, some 370 puppies were registered, compared with 8,000 when the breed was at its peak in 1947, meaning the wire-haired fox terrier will join the KC’s ‘At Watch’ list for the first time in its history. Some blame the time and costs associated with maintaining the dog’s coat. An article in this magazine in the 1950s argued that ‘the modern fox terrier is a fool’, having sacrificed sporting prowess—and, therefore, usefulness with vermin—in pursuit of showring looks (‘*The rise and decline of the fox terrier*’, *August 19, 1954*).

With its wise eyes and distinguished history, the wire-haired fox terrier is due a revival

Dog of the decade 1930s

Top dogs of the 1930s

1. Cocker spaniel (64,021)
2. Wire-haired fox terrier (63,188)
3. Scottish terrier (35,091)

Cocker the walk

BOUNDING in and inching the wire-haired fox terrier off the top spot for the 1930s came the 'merry cocker', so-called thanks to its constantly wagging tail and cheerful disposition. Whereas wire-haired ownership would soon start to decline, the cocker spaniel's star was very much in the ascendant. Topping the tables again for the 1940s, they may have since been edged down the podium by other more popular pups, but that is in no way reflective of a downward turn in numbers—during the 2010s, 228,955 puppies were registered, earning the breed a very respectable second place in the top three.

Originally bred to hunt woodcock and recognised as distinct from the springer in 1893, in its working form, Britain's smallest gundog is expert at flushing and retrieving game. When it comes to the show type, this silky-coated bundle of joy took Best in Show at Crufts in 1930, 1931, 1938 and 1939—truly the decade of the cocker—and has collected the title more times than any other breed. Thanks to its adaptability to town and country, as well as that sunny nature, the dog also became a hugely popular family pet. The cocker ranked as top dog for each year of the 1940s and accounted for about 20% of all puppies registered with the KC in that decade.

> 'Arthur was "best man" at Sir Elton John's civil union'

Unsurprisingly, famous fans of the breed abound: actress Shirley Temple's childhood pet was a cocker spaniel named Rowdy; a teenage Lauren Bacall had the suitably glamorous 'Champagne-coloured' Droopy; and Oprah Winfrey has kept several, including rescue pup Sadie. Sir Elton John's black-and-white cocker Arthur, a gift for the singer's 56th birthday in 2003, was reportedly 'best man' at his civil union to future husband David Furnish.

The breed is, apparently, the perfect accompaniment to power, as well as fame: after the death of John F. Kennedy, a cocker named Shannon was reportedly the only dog kept by his wife, Jacqueline. Richard Nixon held on to 'campaign gift' Checkers for his children after the dog was sent to him by a man in Texas. Not all presidents, however, were won over—Harry S. Truman gave away cocker spaniel puppy Feller, another gift from a supporter, to his doctor.

Closer to home, The Prince and Princess of Wales are devoted to the breed: their first, Lupo, is memorialised in a series of children's books by Aby King. In 2022, the family welcomed Orla into its ranks—the black cocker appeared in Princess Charlotte's official seventh birthday photographs.

The most recognisable cocker spaniel of all time? Surely Lady of Disney's 1955 *Lady and the Tramp*

In love with life: the eternally merry and irrepressible cocker spaniel never runs out of energy, bounding into countless hearts

Getty; Alamy; 2019 Jonathan Yearsley

Unfortunate historical owner notwithstanding, the German shepherd became rightly prized for its courage, trainability and loyalty

Top dogs of the 1940s

1. Cocker spaniel (139,099)

2. German shepherd (57,931)

3. Wire-haired fox terrier (47,349)

Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf dog?

QUITE astoundingly, the German shepherd not only bounced back from anti-German sentiment after the First World War to rank as our second most popular dog in the 1920s, it also managed to reclaim this ranking come the 1940s, half of this decade having been dominated by the Second World War. The breed was even used in Nazi propaganda, with Hitler's own bitch, Blondi, being touted as proof that he was an 'animal lover' (he later poisoned her with cyanide). COUNTRY LIFE headlines of 1927 succinctly demonstrate the negative press these dogs had to contend with: 'Are Alsatians treacherous?' and 'Anglicised Alsatians' (the theory being that uncertain temperament and savage tendencies were perfectly permissible, if not actively encouraged, in German strains).

> 'The breed was even used in Nazi propaganda'

The move to the name Alsatian (or 'Alsatian wolf dog') was intended to distance the breed, which had been developed by German cavalry officer Max von Stephanitz as a herding dog in the 1880s, from such stigma—it wasn't until 1977 that campaigners succeeded in having their dogs registered as German shepherds once again.

The breed's loyalty, courage and versatility ensured it overcame its 'see-saw history… entirely through its own outstanding qualities' (*'Trends in dog ownership', February 11, 1965*). Both the world's and the UK's first formally trained guide dogs were German shepherds (about one in 20 guide dogs in the UK still are today), they remain hugely popular working dogs with the police and military and were the most registered UK breed of the 1980s, which saw a vogue for large dogs, including these and great Danes. →

Male German shepherd Rin Tin Tin was rescued from a First World War bombing in France by an American soldier and went on to star in silent films

Dog of the decade 1950s

No better birthday present could have been desired by Barbra Streisand than her miniature poodle Sadie, given by the cast of *Funny Girl*

Top dogs of the 1950s

1. Miniature poodle (118,048)

2. Cocker spaniel (88,724)

3. German shepherd (77,333)

‘A dapper little dandy’

THIS is undoubtedly rubbish,’ responded Country Life to the suggestion that diminished numbers of wire-haired fox terriers were due to coat maintenance. ‘Miniature poodles have risen in popularity at an almost greater rate than fox terriers have declined, and, if any breed has a coat that needs constant, expert and often expensive barbering, it is the miniature poodle.’ (‘*The rise and decline of the fox terrier*’, *August 19, 1954*).

The author raises a valid point. Fewer examples are seen today with a traditional pom-pom trim, but this was by no means a fancy finish originating in the show ring. The dogs were once used to retrieve birds by duck hunters in Germany and the clip allowed greater speed in the water, as well as keeping certain areas, including the chest and joints, warm.

Differentiated from the larger standard and smaller toy poodle only by its size and sharing a breed standard, this ‘gay-spirited, good-tempered and elegant looking’ little dog, with its ‘very proud carriage’, is known for being the chosen companion of the great Sir Winston Churchill (rather than his ‘namesake’, the British bulldog). After Rufus was hit by a car in 1947, the only acceptable successor was another brown miniature poodle: Rufus II, who became Churchill’s ‘closest confidant’.

Photographed with Churchill and touted by magazines such as *Vogue* as a ‘must-have’ dog, the poodle in its miniature form would top puppy registrations in the UK for two decades running, both the 1950s and 1960s. Country Life concluded that despite grooming needs and a ‘love of its own voice’, the miniature’s ‘natural alertness and vanity make him a dapper little dandy’, ‘almost unbelievably intelligent and devoted to their owners’ (‘*The poodle’s little brother*’, *October 22, 1953*).

Despite Walt Disney owning a standard named Duchess or ‘Dee Dee’, only one poodle character has appeared in a Disney animation to date: Georgette in *Oliver & Company* of 1988

Top dogs of the 1960s

1. Miniature poodle (137,463)

2. German shepherd (116,052)

3. Toy poodle (96,528)

‘A marvel of the modern world’

IT was in about 1910 that poodles standing under 15in at the shoulder were classified as ‘miniature’ and then, in the mid 1950s, the breed was divided once again, with those standing under 11in reclassified as ‘toy’. The craze for these tiny poodles spread to the UK from the US and ‘within an almost unbelievably short time the pop-eyed little weeds that one had come to accept as toy poodles were replaced by well-coated, vivacious, sturdy little dogs that were a credit to the breed’ (*‘Poodles great and small’, February 10, 1972*). Come 1966, Mrs C. E. Perry’s apricot bitch Ch. Oakington Puckshill Amber Sunblush stood supreme champion at Crufts. The poodle, COUNTRY LIFE decreed, had become ‘one of the marvels of the modern world of dogs’ (*‘Trends in dog ownership’, February 11, 1965*).

> ‘Pop-eyed little weeds were replaced by well-coated, vivacious, sturdy little dogs’

With toys charting as the third most popular breed in the UK and miniatures still taking top spot in our hearts, there is no doubt that the poodle was the darling of the 1960s. For Christmas 1962, Elvis Presley presented his future wife, Priscilla, with a toy poodle puppy named Honey. Barbra Streisand appeared on the front cover of *Life* magazine in 1966 with her white miniature Sadie—a 22nd birthday gift from the cast of *Funny Girl*—who, curled in her owner’s arms, also graced the singer’s *Songbird* album cover. A decade on, a white pedigree poodle named Foo-Foo proved the perfect choice for Miss Piggy in *The Muppets*.

Although the poodle has not appeared in the top three in any decade since—in any of its size varieties—it is amply represented in homes throughout the nation by poodle crossbreeds (which are not registered by the KC), be they labradoodles, cockapoos or something less familiar: bolonoodle, pomapoo or doodleman, anyone?

Little and large: the only difference between the toy and standard poodle is height

Dog of the decade 1970s

Small, but mighty: the intelligent, silky-haired Yorkshire terrier belies its beribboned image with its sporting, spirited character

Top dogs of the 1970s

1. Yorkshire terrier (123,042)

2. German shepherd (122,290)

3. Labrador retriever (108,749)

I'm not your toy

COME the 1970s, come the rise of the Yorkshire terrier. The small black-and-tan dog—developed from foundation sire Huddersfield Ben in the 1860s—was once used for pest control in Yorkshire cotton mills, but has since made a name for itself as something of a lady's lapdog: in the show ring, it is the only dog still placed on a decorative box and is categorised as a toy breed, rather than a terrier.

'Alert, intelligent and spirited', the compact little dog with an 'important air' boasts a beautifully silken coat, which has led some to the conclusion that L. Frank Baum's Toto, described in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* of 1900 as 'a little black dog with long silky hair', was written as a Yorkie (although Toto was played by a cairn terrier in the film of 1939, giving that breed a boost in puppy registrations of 658% over the next seven years).

> 'Some conclude that Toto was written as a Yorkie'

High-profile Yorkshire terrier owners have included Richard Nixon, whose dog Pasha resided at the White House in the 1970s and was seen at presidential events, and Audrey Hepburn—Mr Famous starred alongside his mistress in *Funny Face*. During the Second World War, American soldier William Wynne adopted a tiny Yorkie named Smoky. Not only was Smoky successfully sent through a pipe to run telephone lines beneath an airfield in the Philippines—effectively saving the lives of 250 men—she performed tricks, including playing dead and walking a tightrope, to cheer wounded soldiers.

The fact that many people, at first mention of the breed, picture a small mop with a bow on its head was addressed by a COUNTRY LIFE article of 1956: 'It says much for a Yorkshire terrier's instincts and character that, despite the generations that have lived their lives in conditions of almost unbelievable artificiality, the dog lucky enough to escape to a normal life is one of the pluckiest, most intelligent and sporting of the toy dogs. Even the coiffured atoms that appear in the show ring have a perky sprightliness that is not without its fascination' (*'A sporting toy terrier', August 23, 1956*).

Yorkshire terriers Thumbelina and Big Boss both held the title of 'Shortest Dog Living' with *Guinness World Records* in the 1990s, but chihuahuas have dominated in this area ever since

Top dogs of the 1980s

1. German shepherd (166,505)

2. Labrador retriever (153,118)

3. Yorkshire terrier (134,395)

The nation's best friend

IN 1972, we saw the first Andrex puppy television advert. The playful pup has been branded on our consciousness ever since, but it only appeared after regulators decreed that the original concept, of a small girl trailing loo roll through the house, might encourage wastefulness. She was duly replaced by a yellow labrador. The breed has steadily climbed the tables of the UK's most registered and popular dog: third in the 1970s, second in the 1980s and taking top spot by the 1990s, it has remained in first place ever since.

Introduced to Britain in the 1800s by Col Peter Hawker and the Earl of Malmesbury, the labrador retriever originated in Newfoundland, where the dogs helped fishermen to retrieve nets. Here, they replaced the flat-coated retriever as our gundog of choice, being far quicker to mature and, therefore, train. They are now one of the most common breeds of guide dog and incredibly popular family pets thanks to their kind nature,

> 'The labrador fulfils everything one can expect in a dog'

intelligence and devotion. 'It may be claimed for the Labrador that he fulfils almost everything a man or woman can expect in a dog,' raved a COUNTRY LIFE article of 1935, perhaps explaining the dog's meteoric rise (*'Our friend the dog', June 8, 1935*).

The 'only correct colours' of labrador, according to the breed standard, are 'wholly black, yellow and liver/chocolate'. Fox-reds—technically at the dark end of the spectrum of yellow labs—are becoming a more common sight in the field (there are more of them in working lines than show lines), but are by no means a new phenomenon: the first yellow labrador on record, Ben of Hyde of 1899, is thought to have been fox-red or at least very dark yellow.

The peak in labrador-puppy registrations of 2010 may have been prompted by the tear-inducing film *Marley & Me* of 2008, based on the memoir of journalist John Grogan—going against breed type, Marley earns himself the title of 'the world's worst dog'—but there has been no shortage of labrador-owning public figures, from Jennifer Aniston (star of *Marley & Me*) to Bill Clinton, Ernest Hemingway, The King and the late Queen. Education Secretary David Blunkett's guide dog Lucy, a black labrador, made headlines in 1999 when she was sick on the House of Commons's carpet during a Budget debate. →

Whether bundled up in loo paper or leaping logs in the field, the loyal, loving labrador retriever has been top dog since the 1990s

Dog of the decade 1990s

Top dogs of the 1990s

1. Labrador retriever (301,738)

2. German shepherd (209,885)

3. West Highland white terrier (159,211)

Made for the screen

ONCE a pale strain of cairn terrier often 'condemned to the bucket' (different times, barbaric measures), it was the Malcolms of Poltalloch, Argyllshire, who took a fancy to the fairer dogs—finding them easier to spot in the countryside and perhaps less likely to be confused with a fox—'and consistently preserved their white or cream puppies, bred from them with care and thus developed a white strain' (*'The ever-ready West Highland terrier', November 5, 1959*). Initially known as the Poltalloch terrier or the Roseneath, after a line developed on the Duke of Argyll's estate, the West Highland white terrier was recognised by the KC—which describes the little dogs as 'alert, gay and courageous'—in 1907.

> 'They are "possessed of no small amount of self-esteem"'

'These intelligent little terriers,' COUNTRY LIFE continued in 1959, 'with their *joie de vivre*, energy and readiness to oblige their owners under all circumstances, are steadily rising in the esteem of the dog-loving public.' Indeed, it was in 1989 that Cesar chose the breed as the face of its dog-food brand and by the 1990s, West Highland terriers had become the third most popular dog in the UK, with nearly 160,000 puppy registrations.

With friendly little faces that were made for the screen, Westies have been used to portray both P. G. Wodehouse's McIntosh (originally an Aberdeen terrier belonging to Bertie Wooster's Aunt Agatha) and Greyfriars Bobby, in a 2006 film based on the 19th-century Skye terrier. High-profile fans of the breed over the years have included Cary Grant, Alfred Hitchcock and Al Pacino.

Accused by their breed standard of being 'possessed of no small amount of self-esteem with a varminty appearance', a West Highland terrier named Ted was first runner-up in COUNTRY LIFE's 2019 search for Britain's naughtiest dog, after he 'ate Christmas' (demolishing tree, gifts and food). At the better-behaved end of the spectrum, the 2016 Crufts Best in Show title was won by Burneze Geordie Girl (who was congratulated on Twitter by Geordie television presenters Ant and Dec), the first of her breed to do so since 1990. →

Full of zest for life, West Highland white terriers are instantly recognisable, their appealing faces winning them many film roles

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Dog of the decade 2000s

Who can resist a spaniel's eyes? Eager and full of energy, springer spaniels are beloved as gundogs, sniffer dogs and family pets

Top dogs of the 2000s

1. Labrador retriever (413,973)

2. Cocker spaniel (174,511)

3. English springer spaniel (138,178)

With a spring in his step

THE most popular spaniel, according to the KC, for working in the field, the English springer entered the charts of the UK's top dog, in third place, in the same decade that the cocker climbed back into second, confirming our love for these happy and biddable breeds. Taller than the cocker, the springer is descended from the same lines: land spaniels were divided off from water spaniels in the 1600s, then again into 'setting' and 'springing' spaniels. Come the 1800s, these springing spaniels were differentiated according to size, springers being the largest, then Sussex and finally the smaller cocker. Named for their springing motion when flushing quarry for nets, hawks or greyhounds, working English springer spaniels are now used to find, flush and retrieve birds for guns when game-shooting.

Elsewhere, they are frequently employed as sniffer dogs by the police and army, being adept at detecting explosives and drugs. In 2003, springer spaniel Buster, who went from a rescue centre to serving as an Arms and Explosives Search Dog in Iraq, was awarded the PDSA Dickin Medal for bravery, recognised as the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross. Fellow springer and search dog Theo received the same award posthumously in 2012, after dying alongside his handler LCpl Liam Tasker in Afghanistan the previous year—the pair had been one of the most successful teams of the entire conflict. More happily, English springer Max received the PDSA Order of Merit for Outstanding Devotion in 2021—the first pet ever to do so—for his work as a therapy dog.

> 'The springer is an honest workman and a loyal companion'

'Compact, strong, merry and active', the English springer was the pet of choice of both Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly, Princess of Monaco. More recently, US President George W. Bush kept brown-and-white springer Spot Fetcher (named for baseball player Scott Fletcher), the progeny of his own father President George H. W. Bush's dog Millie. 'By nature the springer spaniel is affectionate, eager to please, an honest workman and a loyal and intelligent companion. What more can one ask of a dog?' concluded a COUNTRY LIFE article of 1956 ('*The sporting English springer*', *June 28*).

One of the earliest mentions of a spaniel in the English language was by Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*, written between 1387 and 1400: 'For as a spanyel she wol on hym lepe'

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Dog of the decade 2010s

Clown-like in nature, French bulldogs have enjoyed a surge in popularity in the past few years among stars of stage, screen and sport

Top dogs of the 2010s

1. Labrador retriever (363,595)

2. Cocker spaniel (228,955)

3. French bulldog (163,693)

The French connection

A CYNICAL person, asked to solve the conundrum, "When is a bulldog not a bulldog?" might be disposed to reply, "When he is a *Bouledogue Français*",' quipped this magazine at the turn of the last century (*'Kennel Notes: French bulldogs'*, *March 4, 1911*). Citing the French bulldog's 'bat ears', less projected jaw, lack of furrow in the skull and larger eyes, the author nonetheless went on to conclude that 'as all these characteristics were present in the small English bulldogs of fifty or sixty years ago, there is substantial ground for the belief that both are of the same stock'—thus overturning the conclusion of a different article a year earlier, that 'the word "bulldog" applied to this breed is a misnomer' as 'the *Bouledogue Français* certainly resembles more closely the Boston terrier' (*'Kennel Notes: miniature and French bulldogs'*, *March 5, 1910*).

Despite its name, part of the French bulldog's lineage does trace back to the British toy bulldogs of the 1850s, when Nottingham lace-makers emigrated to France during the Industrial Revolution, taking their dogs with them. There, they are thought to have been cross-bred with other short-faced types, eventually resulting in the 'Frenchie' as we know it.

> 'When is a bulldog not a bulldog?'

The vivacious little dog, 'full of courage, yet with clown-like qualities', says the breed standard, became popular in Paris, appearing in paintings by Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, and with the elite generally. According to the ship records of RMS *Titanic*, a French bulldog named Gamin de Pycombe, belonging to US banker Robert Daniel, went down with the ship in 1912 (his owner survived)—in the early scenes of the 1997 film, one of the dogs is shown boarding the boat.

In the 2010s, the charismatic breed swept the nation, coming in as our third most popular pooch overall—looking at 2018 alone, there were more French bulldog puppies registered than labrador retrievers (36,785 vs 36,526), knocking the mighty lab off its perch at the top for the first year since 1990. However, a sudden surge in popularity brings with it the risk of indiscriminate breeding and an increase in the respiratory issues associated with brachycephalic or flat-faced breeds (the best way to avoid these is to buy a puppy from a reputable breeder).

The rise of the French bulldog was no doubt helped by its role as sidekick to the stars: Lady Gaga, Reece Witherspoon, Martha Stewart, Hugh Jackman, the Beckhams and Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps are all known Frenchie fans. Renowned dog lover and actor Tom Hardy even took his French bulldog Blue to a Leicester Square film screening in 2021, posing for photographs on the red carpet. *Vive le bouledogue français*, indeed!

With thanks to the Kennel Club for puppy-registration statistics and research assistance. Crufts dog show runs from March 7–10 at the NEC Birmingham (www.crufts.org.uk)

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How does your garden village grow?

Knebworth Garden Village, Hertfordshire

A garden city planned by Sir Edwin Lutyens was never brought to completion. Plans to redevelop it today, however, threaten to destroy the character of what was created. **Clive Aslet** reports

ALTHOUGH most people will have heard of Knebworth House, in Hertfordshire, the garden village that was developed on the estate in the Edwardian period, with Sir Edwin Lutyens as its consulting architect, is less familiar. This is surprising, given the attention that has been given to garden cities and garden suburbs in general, not least because, around the year 2000, the creation of new garden villages was promoted as a solution to the planning dilemma of where to build more homes in the crowded South of England.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has more recently re-asserted the point in its publication *Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities* (March 2016). Furthermore, bucolic Knebworth Garden Village was important in Lutyens's career, as a stepping stone—unlikely as it might seem—on the path to the vastly bigger town-planning venture. Astonishingly, before his involvement in New Delhi in India, Central Square at Hampstead Garden Suburb in north London was the only other significant piece of urbanism that he had designed.

Lutyens's influence on Knebworth, beyond buildings produced under his eye, can still be seen by those who know where to look. This is no thanks to the local planning authority, which seems determined to betray his legacy, despite strenuous local efforts to perpetuate it. Rather than take account of local circumstances, planners point at national policy, which they seem insistent on applying.

Fig 1 top: **Homes are set behind generous front gardens.** *Fig 2 left:* **The 1911 brochure hails the benefits of 'bright sunshine'.** *Fig 3 facing page:* **Lutyens's plan for Knebworth**

The connection to Knebworth came through Lutyens's wife, Lady Emily Lytton: the house was her family's seat. In truth, she did not spend many years there when growing up. Although her father, a diplomat, poet and Viceroy of India, was made an Earl, he had little income to support the title; besides, he was made the British ambassador to France in 1887 and it was in Paris that he died in 1891. Knebworth House remained let even after the Earl's eldest son, Victor, came of age in 1897. After his marriage five years later in 1902 to the beautiful, lively Pamela Chichele Plowden, →

KNEBWORTH ESTATE

GENERAL PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

NOTE

THIS PLAN IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION AS TO DEVELOPMENT.

IT IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS THE BASIS OF ANY CONTRACT.

GOLF COURSE

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY

KNEBWORTH LODGE

DEARDS END

PARK WOOD

HOPEGROVE SPRING

WOOLMER GREEN

SCALE OF FEET

REFERENCE -

EXISTING BUILDINGS SHEWN THUS

PROPOSED BUILDINGS SHEWN THUS

A - SITES FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

B - SITES FOR SHOPS

C - SITES FOR CHURCHES, CHAPELS, SCHOOLS.

D - RECREATION GROUNDS, PARKS & ALLOTMENTS.

E - SITES FOR WORKSHOPS.

THOMAS ADAMS
CONSULTING SURVEYOR.
IN CONSULTATION WITH
E. L. LUTYENS.

DRAWING No 229.

Fig 4: **St Martin's Church, Knebworth. Lutyens designed it as a Greek cross within a square**

the tenant allowed the newly-weds to have their honeymoon in the house and the Earl resumed occupation of it soon afterwards.

Lutyens helped his new sister-in-law to bring Knebworth House into the 20th century. Knebworth, comprising only one wing of a vast Tudor quadrangle, the rest of which no longer exists, had been somewhat romanticised by Elizabeth Bulwer Lytton, who settled there in 1811; her son, Edward Bulwer Lytton, writer and politician, went the whole hog, by providing a fantastical skyline of barley-sugar chimneys, heraldic beasts and gargoyles. Lutyens judiciously culled the internal excesses, too heady for neo-Georgian taste or his own preference for aesthetic discipline. The gardens were also altered, although the house exterior was left as found.

Victor Lytton, however, still had to find a way of making his house, modernised in terms of taste, pay. As did many at the turn of the century, Lytton's income from the land had suffered the pinch of the long agricultural recession that began in the 1870s—for an earl, the Knebworth estate had never been large. No wonder then, that the example of Letchworth Garden City, only 15 miles to the north, proved inspirational. There, Ebenezer Howard's first garden city had begun to buy land in 1903, to fulfil his vision of a settlement where people could both live and work in the healthy surroundings of Nature. The first mention of Knebworth Garden Village was made in 1904.

Lytton did not immediately enlist his brother-in-law's help: perhaps Lutyens had already acquired the reputation of being, in the words of a Treasury official attempting to block his appointment as designer of the British Embassy in Washington in the 1920s, 'an extremely extravagant architect who doesn't care what he lets his client in for'. But Lutyens had no qualms about reminding Lytton of his existence, by writing: 'Your buildings proposed are horrible and very vulgar to look upon—do you mind this?' **(*Fig 5*)**

Lytton was evidently stung, because by the time the brochure announcing the scheme had been printed in 1911, Lutyens could be said to have prepared a 'comprehensive scheme' for the development of 1,000 acres, in conjunction with the planner Thomas Adams, who ran the development of Letchworth from 1903–06. It may be significant that the project's long gestation came to an end the year after the passing of the Housing and Town Planning Act, which boosted the garden-city movement.

Whatever the case, by then Lutyens had been commissioned to design the focus of Hampstead Garden Suburb, Central Square, where he battled what he regarded as the *faux* rusticity demanded by Henrietta Barnett—whom he described to his wife as 'proud of being a philistine, … [with] no idea much beyond a window box full of geraniums, calceolarias and lobelias, over which you can see a goose on a green'. The design of St Jude's Church there was compromised as a result.

Given a genuinely rural site at Knebworth, however, his instinct was to regularise it with a geometrical pattern of straight, no doubt tree-lined roads, subsuming three ancient and meandering lanes **(*Fig 3*)**. Still, it is noticeable that the promotional literature does not emphasise the formal qualities of the architecture, so much as the vision. The brochure's cover **(*Fig 2*)** shows two children in a meadow, with a distant chimney and a gable—the only sign of habitation—poking through the trees. The first paragraph of the text trumpets the importance of 'bright sunshine', so much more abundant in rural locations than in smoke-ridden cities.

There were few pre-existing houses on this part of the estate, only three farms and a scatter of houses, often for railway workers, which had sprung up around the railway station of 1884. The new homes were to be set behind verges, hedges and generous front gardens **(*Fig 1*)**. Although the years around 1911 were busy even by Lutyens's hectic standards, he still kept an eye on the garden village. On February 16, for example, an assistant from Lutyens's office wrote to Lytton, deploring a proposal to fill in a supposedly unhealthy pond: to do so would 'spoil the character and colour of the surroundings'. Instead, it was observed, the problem could be solved by cleaning it out.

> 'The brochure trumpets "bright sunshine", so much more abundant in rural locations than smoke-ridden cities'

Four segments of the garden village had been built out by 1914. These survive substantially intact, with broad expanses of shared lawn and the houses, designed by Lutyens's younger contemporaries, including his own son, Robert, set back behind hedges. Two of them—Stockens Green and Deards End Lane—are now conservation areas. Beyond the plan, Lutyens himself contributed a golf club house, in a countrified early-Georgian style, a twist being provided by a very deep roof with dormers and cupola; and the church of St Martin **(*Fig 4*)**, a Greek cross within a square, very plain inside, but majestic from the use of two sizes of order, one of the arcades, the other at the crossing. The First World War brought building work to a halt. St Martin's was hurriedly completed with a plain brick wall at the west end, rather than the intended portico, which remained until Sir Albert Richardson replaced it with a more appropriate design—with pediment, bell turret and three-light window—in the early 1960s.

In the difficult years after the First World War, the garden village languished; can this be explained by Lytton's absence from England during the period 1922–27 when he served as Governor of Bengal? Estate maps

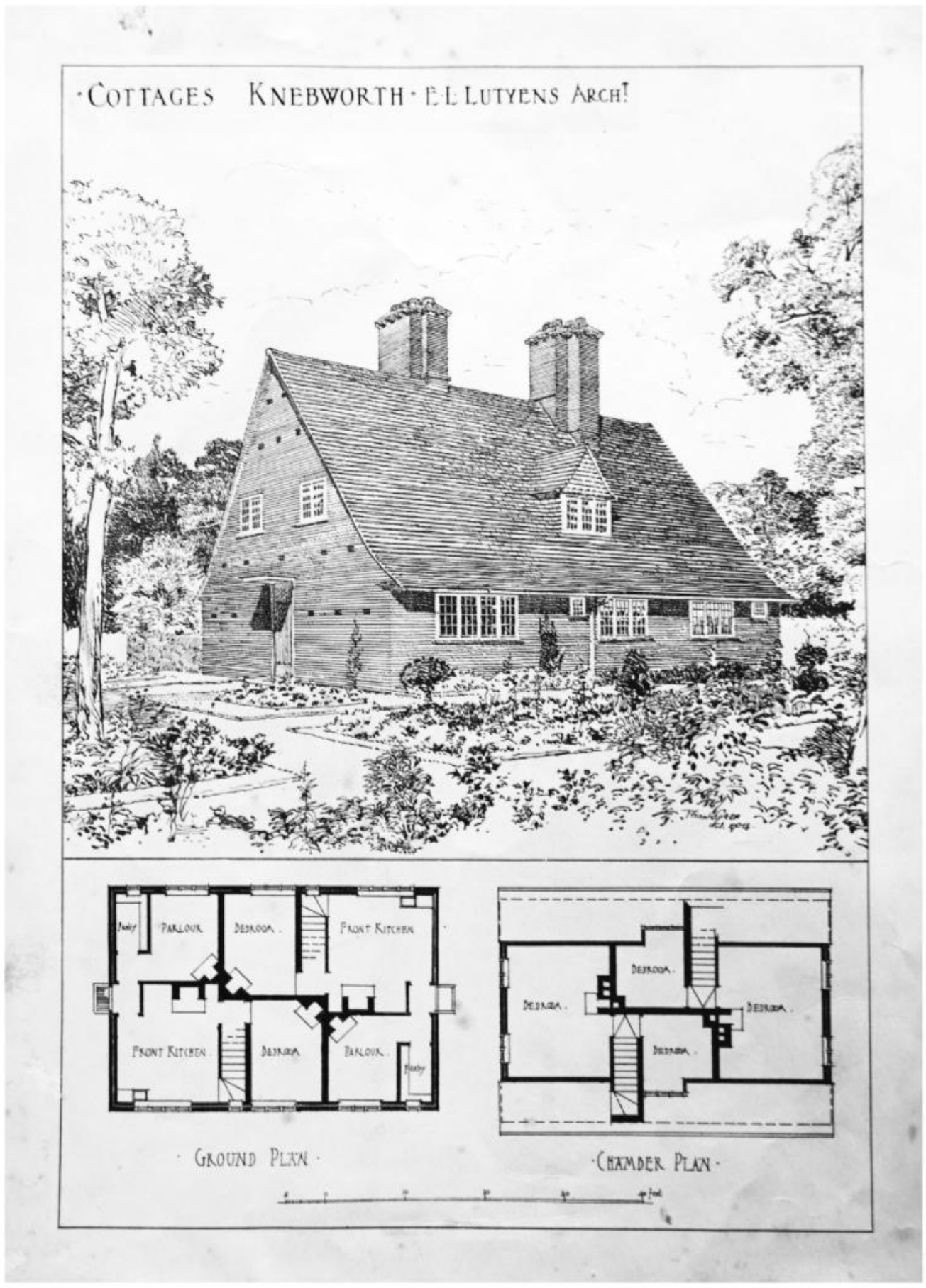

Fig 5: **A cottage at Knebworth designed by Lutyens. He got the job after writing to Lytton: 'Your buildings proposed are horrible and very vulgar to look upon—do you mind this?'**

show, however, that what had been built of the Lutyens scheme survived intact until the dark days of the 1970s, when some of the still-undeveloped areas were filled with the standard housing of the day. Infill continued, more intensively, during the 1980s. In 2019, a former builder's yard on the high street, which might have formed an open nucleus for the settlement, became the site of a large retirement home; the arch into it is so low that ambulances cannot enter.

Yet the inhabitants of Knebworth today still prize the values of the garden village. This was loudly voiced in the meetings that have been held on numberless recent Wednesday evenings in the village hall during the compilation of several parish and local plans. These exercises in local democracy, which took place over many years, invariably reached the same conclusion: that local people like the green and open character of their surroundings, ultimately inherited from the Lutyens scheme. According to the brochure of 1911: 'Lord Lytton determined that the development of his property should proceed only upon the very best lines and with due regard to the wellbeing of all who should reside there.'

His example has been followed by his successor at Knebworth, Henry 3rd Baron Cobbold, who has worked in concert with the equally exemplary Wallace family, farmers who bought some of the land sold from Knebworth to pay for death duties in the 20th century. They both prepared carefully researched design guides for the development of three sites on the edge of the garden village that were allocated for building when the North Herts Local Plan 2011–31 was eventually approved in 2022. Alas, the planning winds have now changed. Rather than localism ruling the day, the final word goes to design-review panels of unelected outsiders. The pro-garden-city sentiments of the 2010s have been replaced by a desire to increase the density of population and discourage car use.

These may be worthy objectives in towns and cities, where they tend to promote community interaction and reduce the carbon emissions, but are not necessarily appropriate in the countryside. True, Knebworth has a railway station, but not every journey will be made to places that can easily be reached by rail. The elderly of the village will not find it easy to bicycle to the nearest superstore, particularly given the hilly character of the topography.

> 'It would be surely better to build on the legacy that exists rather than seek to replace it with a new personality'

Knebworth Garden Village—New Knebworth, as it became known—is not a settlement in search of an identity; it already has a unique one, thanks in part to Lytton and Lutyens, but also given its location in Hertfordshire, a cradle of the garden-city movement. Admittedly, this has been degraded in parts, but it would be surely better to build on the legacy that exists rather than seek to replace it with a new personality, based on today's planning nostrums.

Cars may be regarded as the Devil's work, but is it really wise to insist on a busy settlement using only the ancient lanes that existed before New Knebworth had been born? Or to build new schools without any provision for parents to drop off their young? Hedgerows have come to be regarded as sacrosanct, when any countryman knows that many can be easily re-laid, with little detriment to wildlife or species diversity. Meanwhile, proper planning—as exemplified by Lytton's garden village—is allowed to go hang. To adapt Lutyens's words, the planners will soon have made New Knebworth horrible to look upon. Do the councillors of North Hertfordshire mind this?

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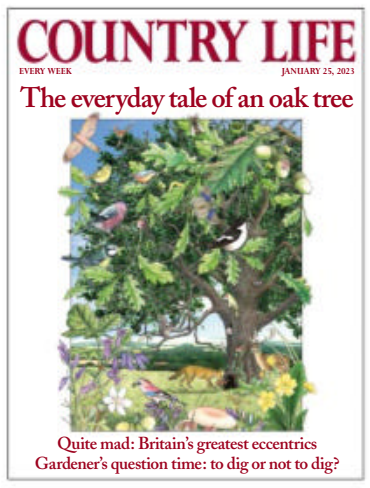
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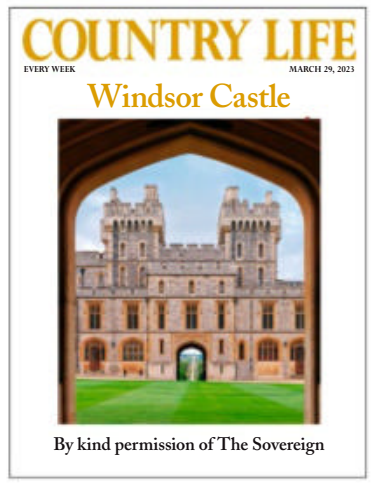

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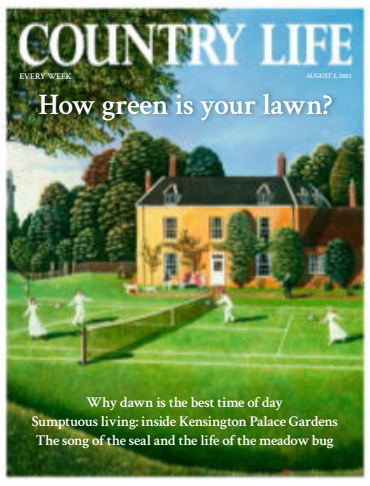
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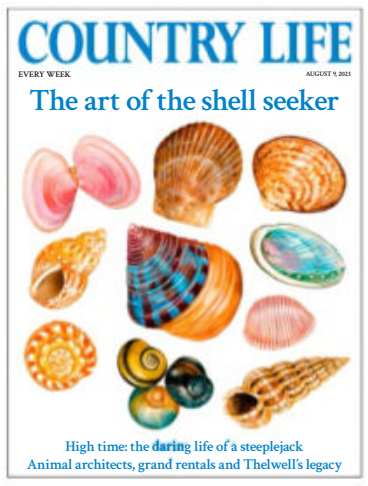
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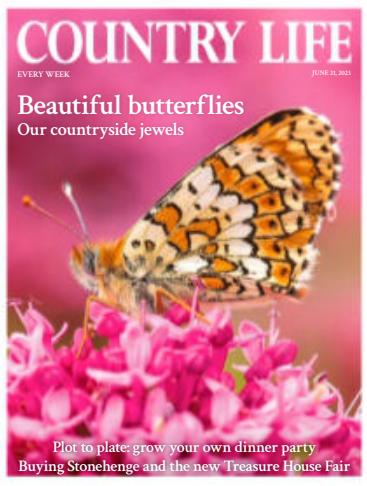
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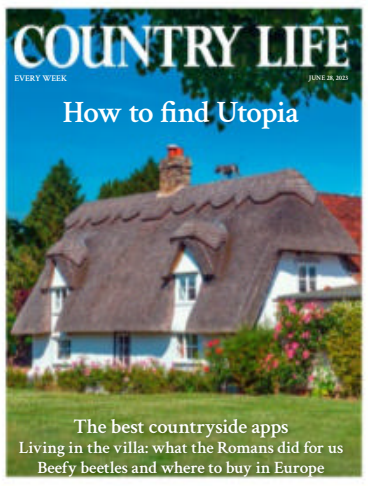
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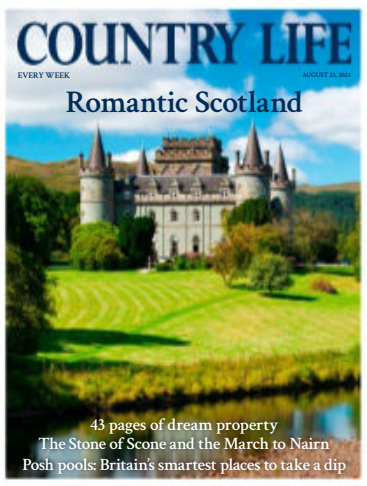
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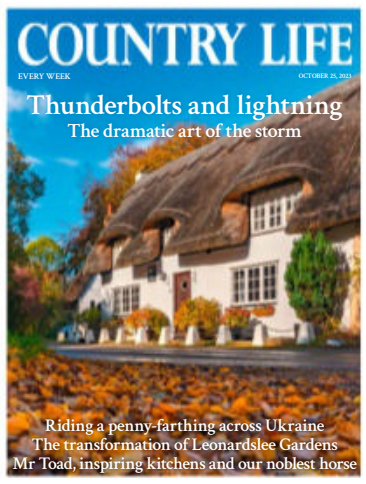
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Here's rooking at you

Rooks may be fond of gathering in sociable eyries high in the treetops, but it would be unwise to take them for granted, cautions **Mark Cocker**, for they are one of the most complex and consistently misrepresented birds in this country

IF you are lucky to live in a place overlooking fields where rooks visit, you will know one of the most endearing qualities possessed by this glorious member of the crow family. I can summarise it best by describing a recent vision when our Derbyshire home was assailed by a powerful winter torrent.

Suddenly, the horizon went black. The trees shuddered violently. The road in front was converted to an instant river and, across the far fields, it looked as if the whole landscape were shrouded in a grey sheet like electric static on a screen. Through binoculars, however, I could still see the rooks feeding, regardless of any downpour. On they plodded across the pasture, pausing to probe for worms, as if it were nothing more than a sunlit spring morning.

Rooks, you realise, are neighbours you can depend upon. The species is spread right through Britain, from Kent and Cornwall to northernmost Scotland. In fact, some of the world's highest densities occur in Aberdeenshire. The birds nest alongside us above many village greens or in town centres, as they do here in Buxton. If not exactly a garden familiar—and they make routine exceptions for churchyards and vicarages—they have come to occupy our busiest urban spaces, including railway, and now even airport, forecourts.

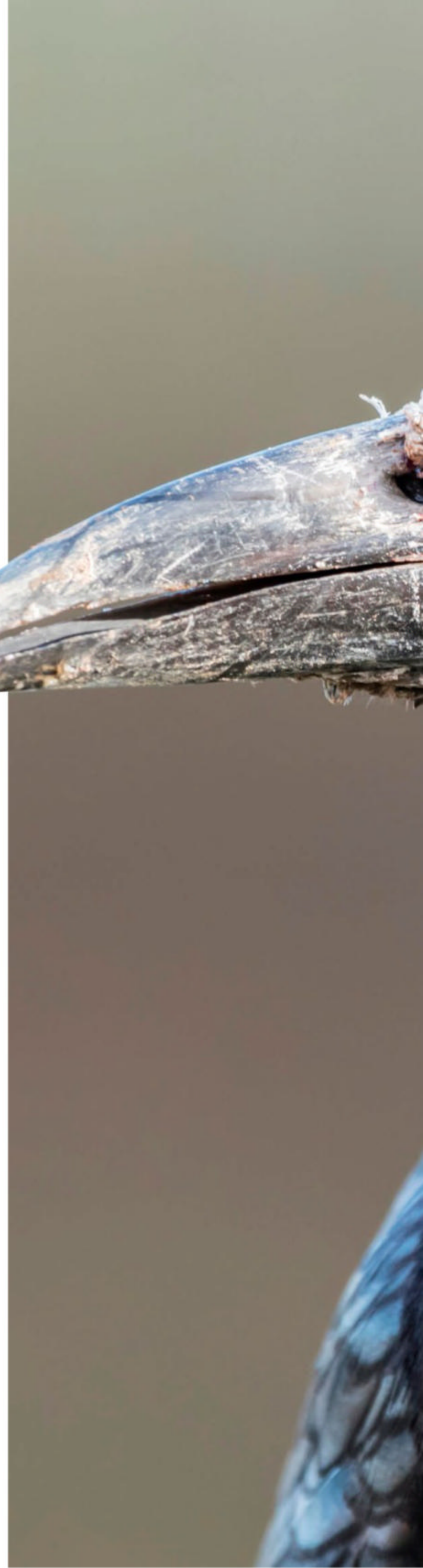
Yet it would be unwise to take rooks for granted. They are also among the most complex, consistently misrepresented birds in this country. Take one of their most straightforward aspects. 'Rook' is one of the shortest official titles for any British bird and also one of the oldest, appearing in Old Norse (*hrōc*) with versions of it in continuous use across Europe, possibly for thousands of years. Even that name trades on something we misjudge. 'Rook' is onomatopoeic of the bird's stereotypic call: the monotone, nasal, long-drawn-out 'caw' sound given in most books.

However, to that basic riff, rooks add numerous variations, including weird, high yelping or yodelling sounds. The naturalist Edmund Selous thought he could identify 30 separate vocal units. Then, there is the extraordinary impact of rooks in chorus. A colony of 30–40 breeding pairs sustains a conversational medley, which ebbs and flows from dawn until nightfall. Rooks at winter roosts, however, when they assemble in hundreds, even thousands, possess a collective music in which all those gnarled crow notes are somehow smoothed down to a rich and euphonious concert and, at its most beautiful, it reminds me of waves roaring over a shingle beach.

> 'Their collective music reminds me of waves roaring over a shingle beach'

Another common rook misconception involves their colour. Look closely at those so-called black birds, especially as they enter the breeding season, and the neck, back and wings possess a glorious oil-on-water effect. Hints of blue, purple, turquoise, even burgundy alternate freely, but best of all are those moments when the iridescence is caught in low-angled light. The Victorian author Richard Jefferies described occasions when rooks were turned to shining white by the conditions.

The behaviour that is perhaps most contended involves their diet. Rooks are widely recognised as the most vegetarian among their family and, in spring, they can go down freshly drilled cereal rows pulling up the new corn. As they feed collectively, they can occasionally do intense, if localised damage. →



Colourful corvids: a close examination of the 'black' rook reveals many other hues

Above: **Airing differences: occasional squabbles can draw an encircling crowd of rooks, leading to the collective noun parliament.**
Right: **Living communally high up in trees in rookeries aids the sociable bird's collective, follow-my-leader food-gathering strategy**

It is this habit that gives rise to the ancient tradition of the 'scarecrow'—somewhat misnamed, given that carrion crows are rarely the culprits—and, until the late 19th century, the career of the 'crow scarer'.

Poor rural youths would wait in the fields, wooden rattles in hand, alert to ward off marauding flocks. Thomas Hardy celebrated a particularly unsuccessful exponent of the bird-scaring art, in his depiction of Jude as a boy in his novel *Jude the Obscure*. The autobiography of the pioneer Labour politician Sir George Edwards recounted his own indelible memories from the 1860s, when he earned a shilling a week for the job. He entitled his book *From Crow-Scaring to Westminster*.

These rural traditions reflect our deep engagement with the species, but they overlook a central axiom of rook life. The birds' whole world, almost everything about their behaviour, revolves around a diet not of human crops, but of subsoil invertebrates. Rooks essentially dig for worms, but also other insects that are agricultural pests, such as leatherjackets. Thus they have long been appreciated for doing as much good as harm.

The rook's prey is not only invisible to the eye, it is unevenly distributed in any landscape and difficult to predict. To maximise efficiency, rooks have developed collective habits and it is their flocking instinct, incidentally, that enables a layperson to separate a rook from the similar carrion crow. An old Norfolk adage best captures the diagnostic process: 'If tha's a rook, tha's a crow, if tha's crows, tha's rooks.' Rooks are almost always in gangs.

> 'Poor rural youths would wait in the fields, wooden rattles in hand, alert to ward off marauding flocks'

To find their randomly distributed food, rooks have evolved a follow-my-leader strategy, one bird effectively guiding others to good opportunities. The success of this foraging technique in turn explains their use of communal nest sites, but also shines a light on the timing of their breeding, which is celebrated in a quatrain by Edward Thomas:

Over the land freckled with snow
half-thawed
The speculating rooks at their nests cawed
And saw from elm-tops, delicate as flowers
of grass,
What we below could not see, Winter pass.

Rooks need to feed and breed in the earliest spring period because the ground is wet and the worms crucially close to the surface. Young rooks are made of nothing but worm mush crammed into their mouths by parents.

The real survival bottleneck for rooks is midsummer, when the land desiccates and invertebrates descend through the soil profile. With all those newly fledged recruits, rooks are at their maximum just as food is scarcest. It's these background conditions that give an element of validity to an old adage, when rook pie was by no means a despised part of the rural diet. It ran: 'If you want your rooks to stay, shoot them hard in early May.'

Unfortunately, climate change may be more effective at weeding out breeding rooks than any amount of direct persecution. For years, I censused rookeries around the Yare and →

Alamy; Laurie Campbell/naturepl.com

A punctual start to nest building is vital for *Corvus frugilegus*—they must feed and breed in early spring when worms are readily available

Waveney floodplains in Norfolk, England's largest area of lowland grazing marsh. It was notable for six adjacent rookeries that had an average of 266 nests each. This was 12 times the figure for Norfolk rookeries during the last national census. Yet a succession of spring droughts between 2007 and 2017 saw their collective population drop from 1,597 to just 696 nests, a fall of 57%.

> 'They have learned to pick over rubbish dumps and snatch up takeaway discards'

Hopefully, there is comfort in knowing that, during the early 1970s, rook numbers fell to a real nadir because of the effects of organochlorine pesticides. With the withdrawal of these chemicals, rooks steadily rebounded and they have long shown themselves to be adaptable.

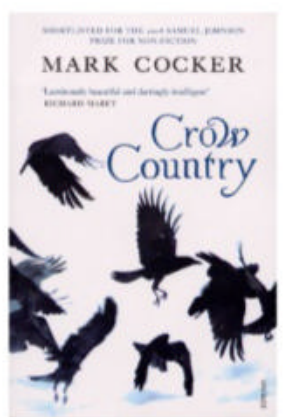
They now forage far out over coastal mudflats at low ebb, sorting through the shoreline jetsam. They have learnt to pick over rubbish dumps and snatch up takeaway discards on our high streets. More recently, at motorway service stations, they have acquired the art of plucking scraps from waste bins, pulling up the plastic bag, fold by fold, until they can reach the food. Rooks have long adjusted themselves to a human landscape. In return, they have given us beauty, food, agricultural aid, endless entertainment, story and hundreds of years of faithful companionship.

Between a rook and a hard place

It may be a 'murder' of crows, but for our most sociable and democratic of birds only a 'parliament' will serve as the collective noun. It derives from the most perplexing aspect of rook folklore, the long-standing belief that the species holds or, at least, once held a version of a human court. The birds were said to gather in a formal circular conclave with individual transgressors located in their midst. Sometimes, so it was claimed, judgement would be passed and punishment, even execution, delivered.

I met people in my childhood claiming to have seen rook parliaments. When I was writing *Birds Britannica*, I received a wonderfully detailed description from someone who recalled observations from the 1930s. However, the event appears now to have crossed beyond the horizon of memory and may no longer be seen.

Who knows what genuine behaviour inspired the myth, except to say that rooks are intensely inquisitive of their fellows' antics and occasional squabbles can automatically trigger the rest of the flock to close around and encircle the individuals in dispute. Perhaps in these chance moments the whole configuration resembled a formal judicial process and the rest was simply a matter of imagination.



Published in 2007, 'Crow Country' (Vintage)—the author's seminal book on rooks and jackdaws—details one man's mission to dispel the ordinariness associated with the little-known lives of these highly complicated corvids

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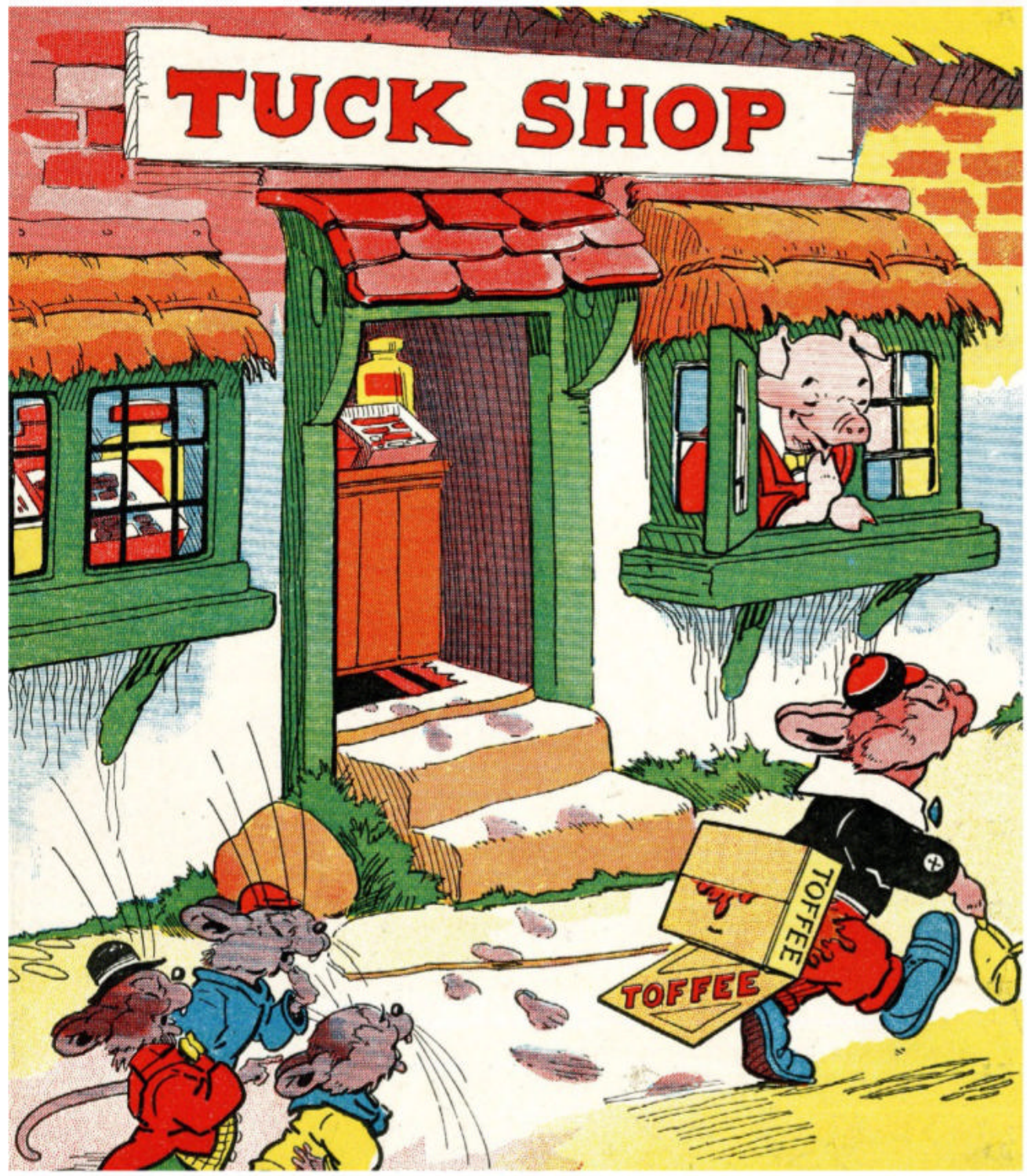
Hitting the sweet spot

Barley sugars, pink shrimps and flying saucers: more than merely a sugar high, 'sweets were like currency at school', discovers **Madeleine Silver** as she gets stuck into tuck shops

WHEN a girl broke into our house tuck shop with a hockey stick and it was subsequently shut for a month, it was as if 60 pupils were suffering a bereavement. No Space Raiders, no Wham bars, no sherbet Dip Dabs to see us through those dark January days. We weren't alone in our reliance on that saccharine oasis. At the bucolic Dorset prep school Hanford, such is the importance of the Sunday-afternoon sugar hit that a parent of a recent outgoing pupil donated a bench with a plaque inscribed: 'Keep your friends close and your sweets closer!'

> 'Keep your friends close and your sweets closer!'

Queues are so long for the tuck shop at Heathfield, Berkshire (housed in a storybook-worthy, bay-windowed shop), that one old girl whose dorm was above it remembers presenting Tuck Shop FM with her boom box on the windowsill, to keep the feet of patient customers tapping. A girl who left Tudor Hall, Oxfordshire, in the noughties recalls being given 50p pieces by sixth formers to corridor creep to the vending machine when the tuck shop (run by Mrs Tuckwell) was shut, before lowering the goods out of the window to them in a bag tied with a dressing-gown cord—a sound grounding for a future investment manager. As the Old Radleian and man behind the sweet empire Candy Kittens Jamie Laing has said: 'Sweets were like currency at school.'



Above: **A sticky situation outside the Animals' Tuck Shop in the 1930 *Playtime Annual*.**
Facing page: **A prized bag of sweets draws an expectant young crowd in 1960s London**

It is in Thomas Hughes's 1857 novel *Tom Brown's School Days*, set at Rugby School, that the earliest published reference to a 'tuck shop' can be found, here in the form of Sally Harrowell's pie shop. '"Come along down to Sally Harrowell's; that's our School-house tuck-shop—she bakes such stunning murphies—we'll have a penn'orth each for tea; come along, or they'll all be gone," beckoned Harry 'Scud' East.' During the First World War, a school tuck shop was planned at Rugby, Warwickshire, as a food source for the students, to ensure they weren't competing with people in town for supplies—the then headmaster Albert David made town food shops out of bounds and stopped pupils receiving parcels from home. Yet 'The Stodge', as it became known (and still is today), didn't open on Barby Road next to the school's Temple Reading Room building until January 1922.

For the Wykehamists of the 19th century, Octo La Croix—who ran a confectionery shop at 8, College Street in Winchester, Hampshire, from the 1830s—was something of a lifeline, selling his supplies pitch side on the playing fields, as well as from his shop (sugared buns, kidney pies and small ices). In a 'Notions' book (the school slang) kept by a pupil in the 1860s, →

Alamy; Mary Evans Picture Library; The Paul Kaye Collection/Mary Evans; Getty

Tuck in

Sweet treats in literature

‘Malory Towers’ and ‘St Clare’s’ series, Enid Blyton
Midnight feasts, post-lacrosse jammy buns and overspilling tuck boxes are bountiful in Enid Blyton’s boarding-school idylls. ‘“Golly! Pork pie and chocolate cake, sardines and Nestlé’s milk, chocolate and peppermint creams, tinned pineapple and ginger beer!” said Janet. “Talk about a feast!”’

‘Harry Potter’ series, J. K. Rowling
Muggle tuck is put to shame with Fizzing Whizzbees (‘sherbet balls that make you levitate’), Sugar Quills to suck on in class, Droobles Best Blowing Gum (‘which filled a room with bluebell-coloured bubbles that refused to pop for days’) and some you might want to avoid—chocolate frogs and earwax-flavoured jelly beans, anyone?

***Boy*, Roald Dahl**
‘A parcel of tuck was sent once a week by anxious mothers to their ravenous little sons, and an average tuck-box would probably contain, at almost any time, half a home-made currant cake, a packet of squashed-fly biscuits, a couple of oranges, an apple, a banana, a pot of strawberry jam or Marmite, a bar of chocolate, a bag of Liquorice Allsorts and a tin of Bassett’s lemonade powder,’ remembered Dahl in his childhood memoir.

***Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School*, Charles Hamilton**
The ‘Fat Owl of the Remove’, Billy Bunter is the greediest of schoolboys, the stickier the buns, the better. ‘There was a wedge of cake in Bunter’s fat hand—a chunk of cake on a box lid—and a sea of crumbs on the floor. It was—or had been—a luscious cake, and Bunter had been enjoying life.’

A feast for the eyes: a well-stocked tuck shop at the 1926 Schoolboy’s Exhibition, London

references to treats abound, as Winchester’s archivist Suzanne Foster reveals: ‘Away from formal dining, the boys might drink Squish (weak tea) with a Horn of Plenty (a cream horn) or Tug Bun (a currant bun), followed by Suction (sweets) and Condensers (condensed milk), particularly if they were a Grubster (one who eats too much). If they had something to celebrate, then perhaps Toad (a piece of burnt toast put into beer to warm it) was on the menu, to accompany a Hot Plate (dish of sausages, eggs, potatoes and peas ordered from School Shop).’

Indeed, the most highly prized stock of a tuck shop can be less than appealing to the untrained palate—take Radley in Oxfordshire’s famed chicken roll, a soft bread roll filled with minced chicken in mayonnaise, with a minute lettuce garnish. Others serve culinary folklore: Eton Mess was served in the Berkshire school’s ‘sock shop’ in the 1930s, made either with strawberries or bananas mixed with ice cream or cream—meringue was a later addition.

When it was announced a decade ago that sweets and chocolate would be banned in state-school tuck shops, it was a triumphant day for nutritionists and one of mourning for anyone under the nostalgic spell of a bag of tangled strawberry laces. There’s been a flurry of admirably healthy outlets at public schools for some time, too. Yet it’s the hatches, laundry rooms and makeshift shops where paper bags are still filled with sherbet lemons from sticky jars that will see reluctant children through double chemistry—the only giveaway that rush of blood to the face as the lozenge cracks. Here is your first taste of spending power, a currency for friendships and hierarchy, as well as the basis for the kind of illicit dealing that won’t get you expelled—all the more daring when your mother is your collaborator.

‘It is not only girls who try to sneak the odd bit of tuck in, there have been a few embarrassed parents who I’ve called over the years to let them know that the “box of socks” they sent their daughters rattled suspiciously,’ reveals Hanford’s long-time senior matron Jane Cosgrove, whose nose, held questingly aloft as her charges fall asleep, is trained to detect the smell of sugar.

Beyond and above

Excellent academic results are only one of the many facets of Cheltenham College, a school that puts the emphasis on developing the whole person

FAMILIES with children who could choose to, come to Cheltenham College. Why is that? Why does the College become their first choice? What is it that puts the school somehow beyond and above others?

With a brilliant reputation for academic excellence and developing pupils beyond the classroom, Cheltenham College is one of the country's leading co-educational independent schools for boarding and day pupils aged 13–18. Located in the heart of Regency Cheltenham Spa, Gloucestershire, it blends its rich history with modern facilities and technologies. In 2023, the Independent Schools Inspectorate found the College 'Excellent in All Areas', stating, 'the school wholeheartedly fulfils its aim to equip pupils to lead purposeful and fulfilling lives by providing an excellent all-round education'.

Clockwise from top: **the College; re-enacting a Greek play in Classics; a science lesson**

> 'Teaching staff inspire self-understanding and self-confidence'

Teaching staff inspire self-understanding and self-confidence within the classroom and academic ambition is demonstrated in successful exam results. This year, the College has risen by 65 places in the *Sunday Times* Parent Power academic league table, sitting in the top 150 independent schools based upon GCSE and A-level results. There is a large focus on developing the whole person, ensuring pupils gain not only the qualifications they need, but also the abilities and character to open doors later in life.

Cricket is one of the many sports on offer

Pupils explore new avenues outside of lessons and with the 35 co-curricular clubs that operate weekly, there is something for everyone to try. Sports teams range from rowing to equestrian, with more than 82% of pupils representing the College in competitive sport fixtures throughout the year. Each Wednesday, pupils take part in community-action projects, some of which include volunteering at local care homes and primary schools.

The nine Boarding Houses and two Day Houses each have their own distinctive and vibrant characteristics. The Houses promote community through 'family' systems or 'tribes', where pupils from all year groups socialise together. There are supportive policies and structures to promote health and wellbeing from Third Form to Upper Sixth and an experienced welfare and pastoral team is on-site and available to pupils at all times.

When visiting Cheltenham College in 2023, *The Good Schools Guide* reported: 'Every school says it produces all-rounded pupils—this one really does.'

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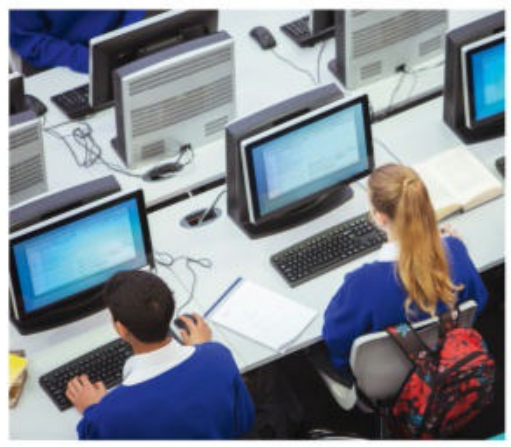
Book your place

Independent schools around the country are offering prospective parents and pupils an insight into their atmosphere and facilities through open mornings. Here are 50 to choose from



Open season: the perfect introduction to the opportunities—curricular and extracurricular—that are on offer at independent schools

North

Abbotsholme School, Rocester, Staffordshire: March 9 (www.abbotsholme.co.uk)
Ampleforth College, North Yorkshire: May 11 (www.ampleforthcollege.org.uk)
Aysgarth School, Bedale, North Yorkshire: March 9 (www.aysgarthschool.com)
Durham School, Co Durham: March 16 (www.dcsf.org.uk)
Fettes College, Edinburgh, Scotland: March 2 (www.fettes.com)
Giggleswick School, Settle, North Yorkshire: April 27 (www.giggleswick.org.uk)
Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh, Scotland: March 9 (www.merchiston.co.uk)
Queen Margaret's School For Girls, York, North Yorkshire: March 16 (www.queenmargarets.com)
Repton Prep School, Derbyshire: March 2 and May 11 (www.repton.org.uk)
Sedbergh, Cumbria: March 9, April 27 and May 11 (www.sedbergh school.org)
S. Anselm, Bakewell, Derbyshire: March 2 (www.sanselms.co.uk)
Stonyhurst, Lancashire: March 2 and 9 (www.stonyhurst.ac.uk)

West

Cheltenham College, Gloucestershire: March 16 and April 27 (www.cheltenhamcollege.org)
Christ College, Brecon, Powys, Wales: March 16 (www.christcollegebrecon.com)
Magdalen College School, Oxford, Oxfordshire: June 27 (www.mcsoxford.org)
Malvern College, Worcestershire: March 2 (www.malverncollege.org)
Packwood Haugh, Shrewsbury, Shropshire: March 2 (www.packwood-haugh.co.uk)
Radley College, Abingdon, Oxfordshire: March 2 and 16, April 27, May 11, June 15 and 22 (www.radley.org.uk)
Shrewsbury School, Shropshire: March 2 and June 8 (3rd Form); May 11 (sixth form) (www.shrewsbury.org.uk)
UWC Atlantic College, Llantwit Major, South Wales: September 21 (www.uwcatlantic.org)

East

Ashford School, Kent: March 14 (www.ashfordschool.co.uk)
Beeston Hall, Cromer, Norfolk: March 2 (www.beestonhall.co.uk)
Felsted School, Dunmow, Essex: April 27 (reception), May 11 (sixth form), June 8 (Year 9) (www.felsted.org)
Greshams, Holt, Norfolk: May 3 (prep school) and May 4 (www.greshams.com)

London

Alleyn's School, SE22: May 24 (www.alleyns.org.uk)
Bassett House School, W10: May 9 (prep school) (www.bassetths.org.uk)
Francis Holland School, NW1: March 12 and May 1 (www.fhs-nw1.org.uk)
Harrow School, Middlesex: March 16, April 20 and April 27 (www.harrowschool.org.uk)
Ibstock Place, SW15: March 19 (prep school) and May 8 (senior) (www.ibstockplaceschool.co.uk)
James Allen's Girls' School, SE22: March 12 (www.jags.org.uk)
Putney High School, SW15: April 24 (www.putneyhigh.gdst.net)
Ravenscourt Park Preparatory School, W6: June 18 (www.rpps.co.uk)
Royal Russell School, CR9: April 30, May 16 and June 11 (www.royalrussell.co.uk)
St Benedict's, W5: May 2 (senior) and May 16 (prep school) (www.stbenedicts.org.uk)

South

Benenden School, Cranbrook, Kent: March 7, May 11, June 15 and 25 (www.benenden.school)
Cheam, Headley, Berkshire: March 1 and May 18 (www.cheamschool.co.uk)
Horris Hill, Newbury, Berkshire: April 19 (www.horrishill.com)
Lancing College, West Sussex: March 16 (sixth form), April 27 and May 18 (Year 9) (www.lancingcollege.co.uk)
Mayfield School, East Sussex: March 15 (www.mayfieldgirls.org)
Papplewick, Ascot, Berkshire: May 11 (www.papplewick.org.uk)
Roedean School, Brighton, East Sussex: March 2, May 11 (www.roedean.co.uk)
Seaford College, Petworth, West Sussex: May 11 (www.seaford.org)

South-West

Port Regis, Shaftesbury, Dorset: May 10–11 (www.portregis.com)
Queen's College, Taunton, Somerset: March 1 and May 6 (www.queenscollege.org.uk)
Shebbear College, Beaworthy, Devon: April 20 (www.shebbear college.co.uk)
Sherborne School, Sherborne, Dorset: March 2 and 14, April 27, May 18, June 8 (www.sherborne.org)
Sherborne School for Girls, Sherborne, Dorset: March 2 and 16, April 19, May 11, June 7 and 21 (www.sherborne.com)
Taunton School, Taunton, Somerset: April 27 (www.tauntonschool.co.uk)
Truro School, Truro, Cornwall (prep): March 9 (www.truroschool.com)
West Buckland School, Barnstaple, Devon: May 6 (www.westbuckland.com)

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Beyond & Above

Families and their children who could go to any school they wish, choose to come to Cheltenham College. Why is that? Why does Cheltenham become their first choice? Perhaps it is, quite simply, that we look to astonish – whether that's our top academic performance, our fabulous track record for sport of all kinds, our House system and exceptional pastoral care, or our vast range of co-curricular opportunities. And yet, it's more than that. Come and see.

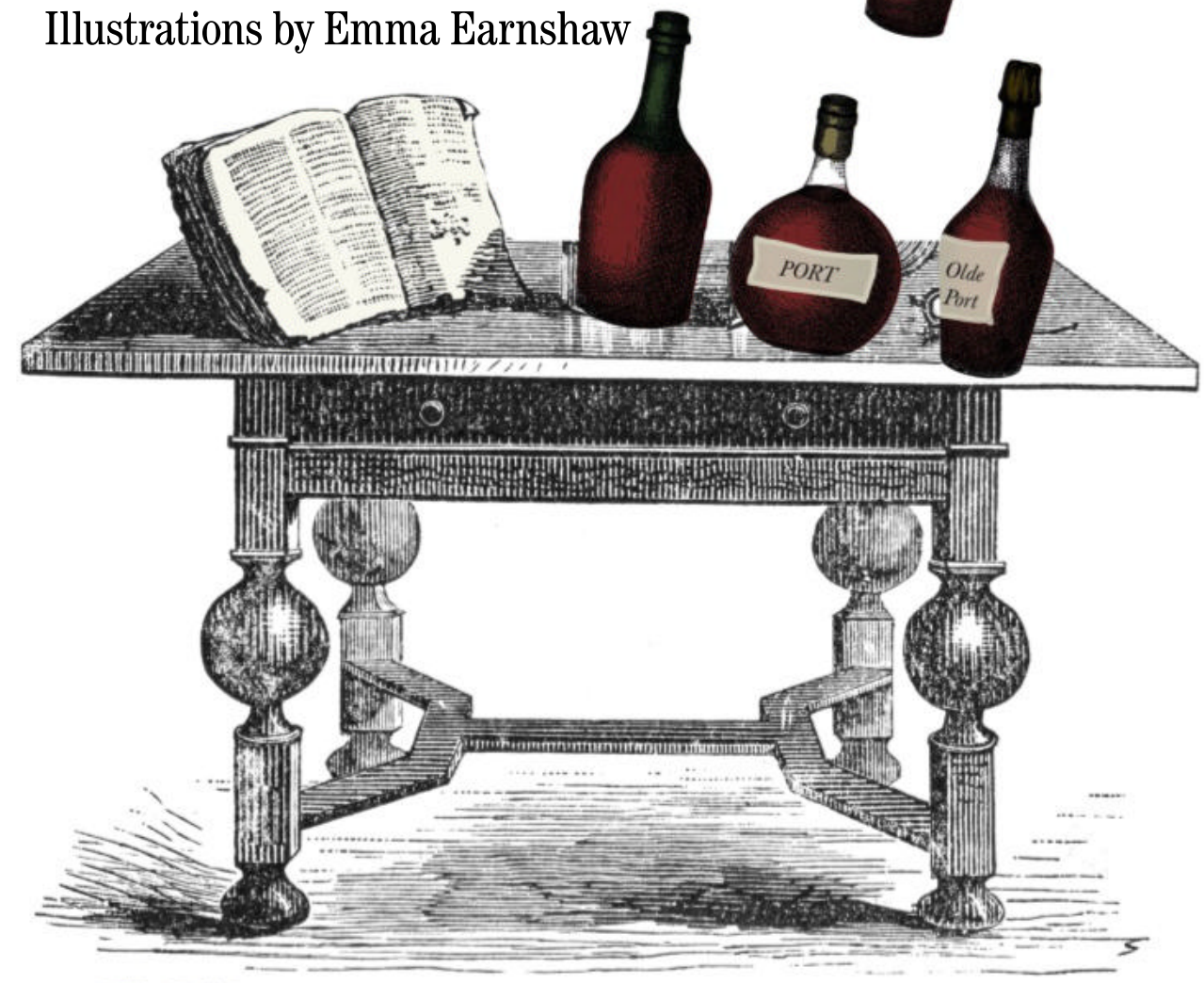
cheltenhamcollege.org

Independent Day and Boarding School for Girls & Boys aged 3-18

Rascals and rusticants

Pet bears and lobsters on chains, horses in the bedroom and firearms at the window: British universities have long tolerated outlandish behaviour. But when is enough enough, asks **Harry Pearson**

Illustrations by Emma Earnshaw



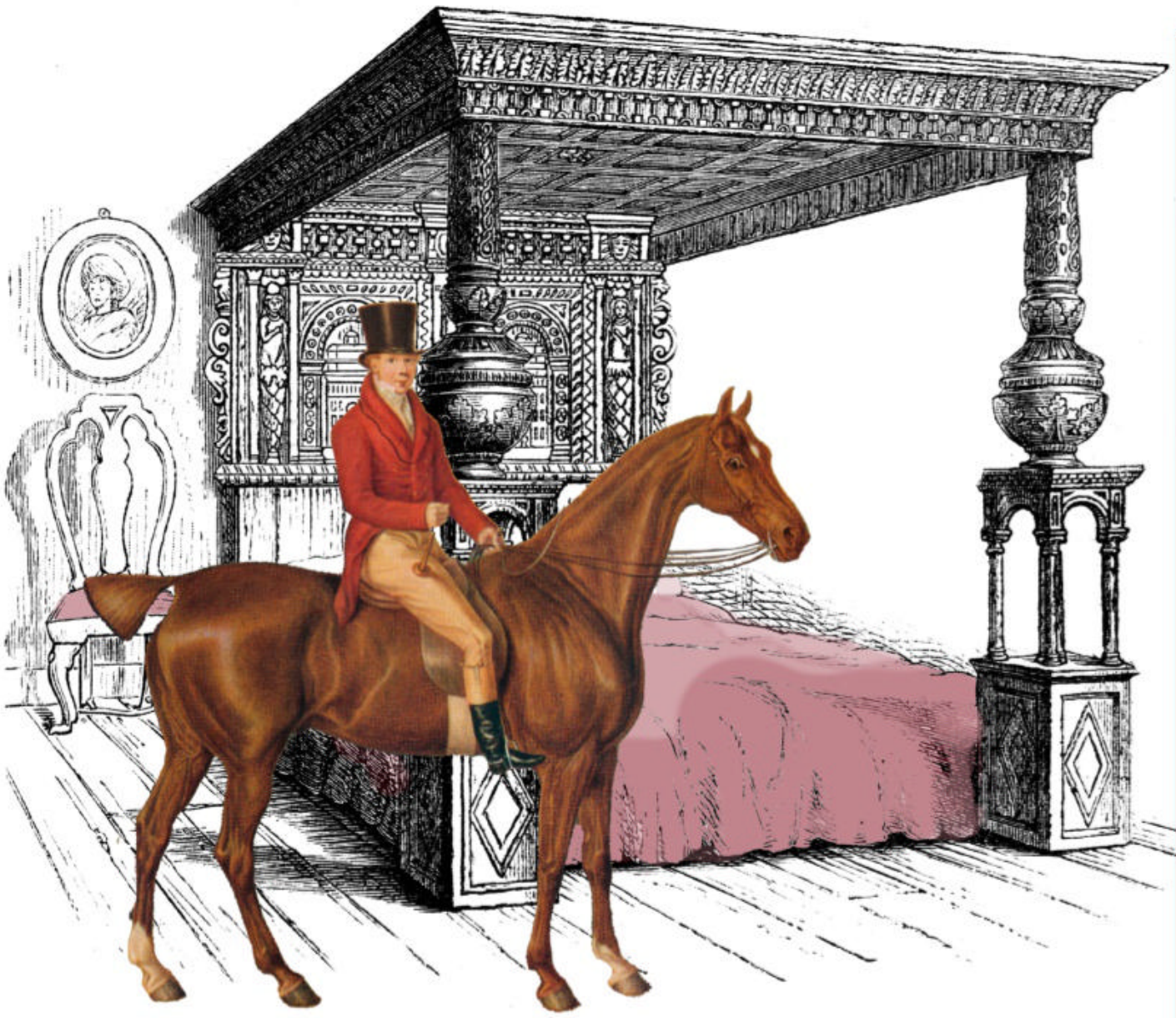
YOUR starter for 10 on *University Challenge*: what links poet John Milton, explorer Sir Richard Burton and playwright Oscar Wilde? The answer? All three were rusticated. To the uninitiated, that may sound like something to make a chap's eyes water, but, in fact, it's the practice at Oxford, Cambridge and Durham Universities of temporarily suspending students, banning them from all facilities and sending them out—as the name suggests—'into the countryside'. Rustication is a lesser punishment than being 'sent down' (straight expulsion), but both are fates suffered by students who went on to achieve fame or notoriety—and, in some cases, both.

Today, an intemperate outburst on social media might be enough to see a student handed their wellies and a stout stick, but, in the past, university authorities took a more *laissez-faire* attitude to discipline. There was toleration of a good deal of horseplay, sometimes quite literally involving horses—leaving a nag in a tutor's bedroom was considered a terribly amusing jape by Regency bucks such as John 'Mad Jack' Mytton, who arrived at Cambridge in 1816, together with 2,000 bottles of Port 'to see him through his studies', got bored and left before they were finished. As a result, some of the most notorious scoundrels in British history have made it through our finest universities without a blot on their copybooks.

Joyrider: Richard 'Beau' Nash, is famed for riding naked through a village on a cow

Take notorious Elizabethan rakehell the 2nd Earl of Rochester, who entered Wadham College, Oxford in 1660 and quickly 'grew debauched' (despite being only 13 at the time), but was awarded an honorary MA a year later. Richard 'Beau' Nash, the self-styled King of Bath, miraculously avoided punishment during his time at Jesus College, Oxford despite riding naked through an Oxfordshire village mounted on a cow. Lord Byron passed merrily through Cambridge, even though he responded to Trinity College's rule prohibiting students from keeping dogs by turning up

Getty; Alamy



Gift horse: leaving a horse in a tutor's bedroom was a highlight of John 'Mad Jack' Mytton's brief Cambridge career; he arrived in 1816 with some 2,000 bottles of Port

with a pet bear. Devil-worshipping occultist Aleister Crowley was proclaimed 'the wickedest man in the world' by the tabloid press, but, like Byron, failed to trouble the powers at Trinity with his evil-doing.

> 'Lord Byron responded to Trinity's rule prohibiting dogs by turning up with a pet bear'

By and large, the biggest troublemakers have been male. Female students have a less inglorious history, not due to any innate goodness, but because women were only admitted to higher education for the first time in 1869—and even then in tiny and select numbers. Thankfully, no British university has ever imitated the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada, which, in 1883, expelled the entire female student body for the appalling offence of not being male.

Surprisingly, it is poets who have proved the most unruly of students. During his time at Cambridge, Milton grew so pale from study that his skin became luminous like the moon. His efforts counted for nothing in the eyes of his tutor, the notoriously strict clergyman William Chappell. Chappell was so ferocious in the Latin disputations that formed the core of the curriculum that he made one opponent, the future Bishop of Bangor, faint dead away. Milton clashed frequently with the fearsome Chappell and, after a particularly violent dispute in 1626, he was rusticated (albeit to the bucolic wastes of London). The author of *Paradise Lost* returned from his suspension and received an MA in 1632.

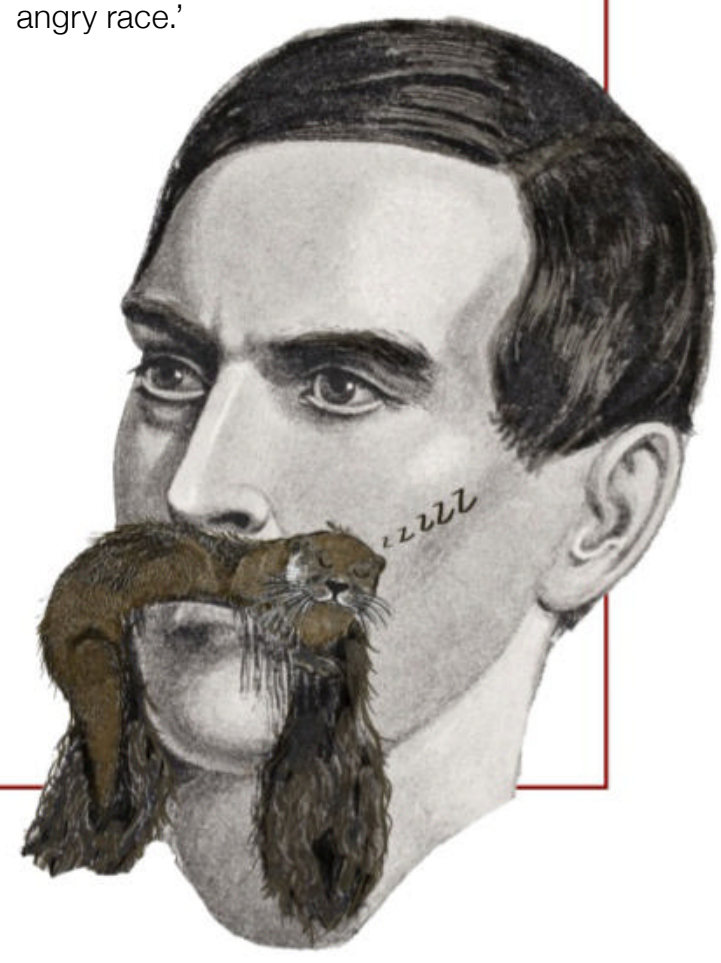
Walter Savage Landor's time at Trinity College, Oxford might have been expected to end badly. The radical poet had been expelled from Rugby School after taking umbrage with the headmaster and embarrassed his family on his return home by trapping a local farmer in a net and hurling him in the river, after he'd refused permission to fish on his land.

At Trinity, Landor made himself an object of curiosity by refusing to powder his hair and loudly proclaiming his support for the French Revolution. Although his tutor was impressed with the poet's intelligence, this behaviour did not endear him to the college authorities. Following an incident in 1794, during which he fired a gun at the window of a noisy Tory student during morning prayers, Landor was rusticated for 12 months. True to his obstinate character, he refused to return to Oxford after his suspension and ran off to Wales instead.

Pre-Raphaelite poet Algernon Swinburne would garner a reputation for unusual and often sinister behaviour. The French author Guy de Maupassant recalled with a shudder the *petit*, red-haired Englishman sitting drunk at the dining table of a Normandy house 'full of strange noises and the shadows of sadism', as a huge pet monkey danced about amid the crockery. During his days at Balliol College, Swinburne had yet fully to embrace such studied depravity. Yet he still managed to →

'The jaw of the devil'

The great Victorian explorer Sir Richard Burton was described by his fellow Oxford miscreant Algernon Swinburne as having a 'look of unspeakable horror… the brow of a god and the jaw of the Devil'. Before arriving at Trinity College, Oxford in 1840, Burton signalled his volatile attitude to education by smashing a violin over his music teacher's head. At Trinity, he ran up huge debts with the town tailors, held rowdy parties and drew satirical cartoons of the staff. Burton had a moustache so luxurious, he appeared to have a baby otter sleeping on his top lip (*below*). When a fellow undergraduate laughed at it, Burton challenged him to a duel. Tired of the Devonian's wild antics, the Master of Trinity seized on his attendance at an illicit steeplechase as reason to send him down. Burton departed in grand style, riding a dog cart over the college flowerbeds as tooted a tin trumpet and blew kisses at shop girls. 'Travellers,' he would later explain, 'like poets, are mostly an angry race.'



‘Tyrannical proceedings’

Poet Percy Bysshe Shelley’s time at University College, Oxford was brief, but eventful. He arrived in April 1810 and was gone less than a year later. In that time, he attended only one lecture. A chance meeting with Thomas Jefferson Hogg led to a lasting friendship that landed them in terrible trouble. In November 1810, they composed *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson*, a collection of anti-monarchist poems purportedly written by the washerwoman who’d attempted to assassinate George III with a pudding knife. When that failed to stir up sufficient controversy, the duo anonymously published a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, listing the reasons for the non-existence of God. Questioned by the Master of the University on this act of blasphemy, they would neither confirm nor deny authorship. In what Shelley described as ‘tyrannical proceedings’, they were found guilty and sent down. Shelley’s father was furious, demanding his son return home. The poet refused, compounding his disgrace by eloping with 16-year-old Harriet Westbrook.

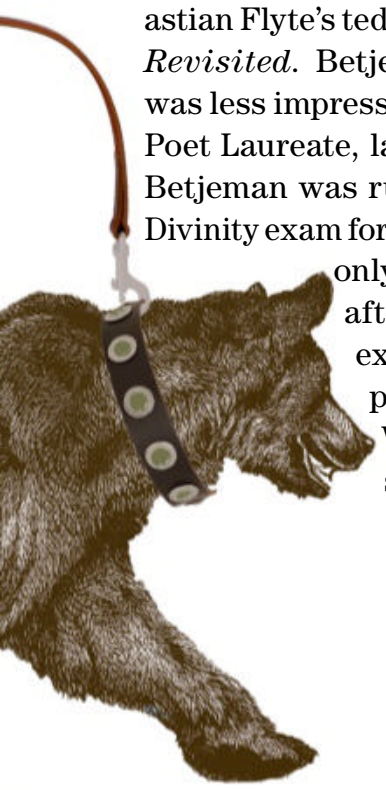
If Britain’s grandest universities appear often to have tolerated outlandish behaviour, one would think our art schools would be even more of a haven for the rebellious, yet that is not entirely the case. John Lennon got a ‘red letter’ from Liverpool College of Art for a series of offences that included jumping into the lap of a naked model during a life-drawing class. Meanwhile, fellow rock star Eric Clapton got his marching orders from Kingston School of Art for, in his own words, ‘spending all my time playing guitar, or down the pub’. None of these illustrious figures suffered the fate outlined by Waugh to his son Auberon—rusticated from Christ Church, Oxford for failing his prelim exams. ‘There are only two possible careers for a man who has been sent down from Oxford,’ Waugh senior said grimly. ‘You must become either a schoolmaster or a spy.’ As it was, Auberon suffered an even worse fate—he went into journalism.

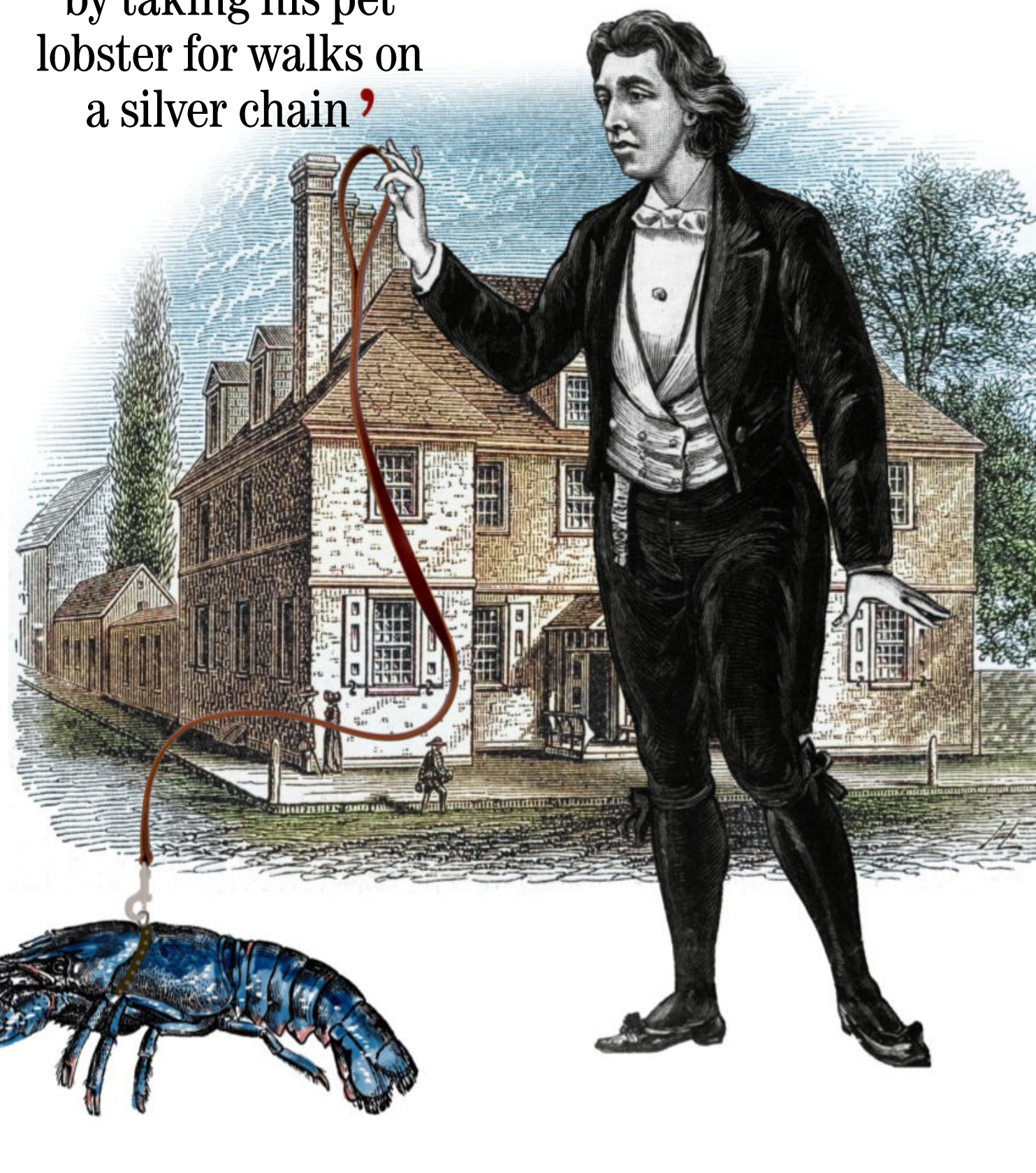
cause a huge kerfuffle in 1859, by publicly celebrating an Italian revolutionary’s attempt to blow up Emperor Napoleon III. Rusticated for a year, Swinburne returned to university, but never completed his degree.

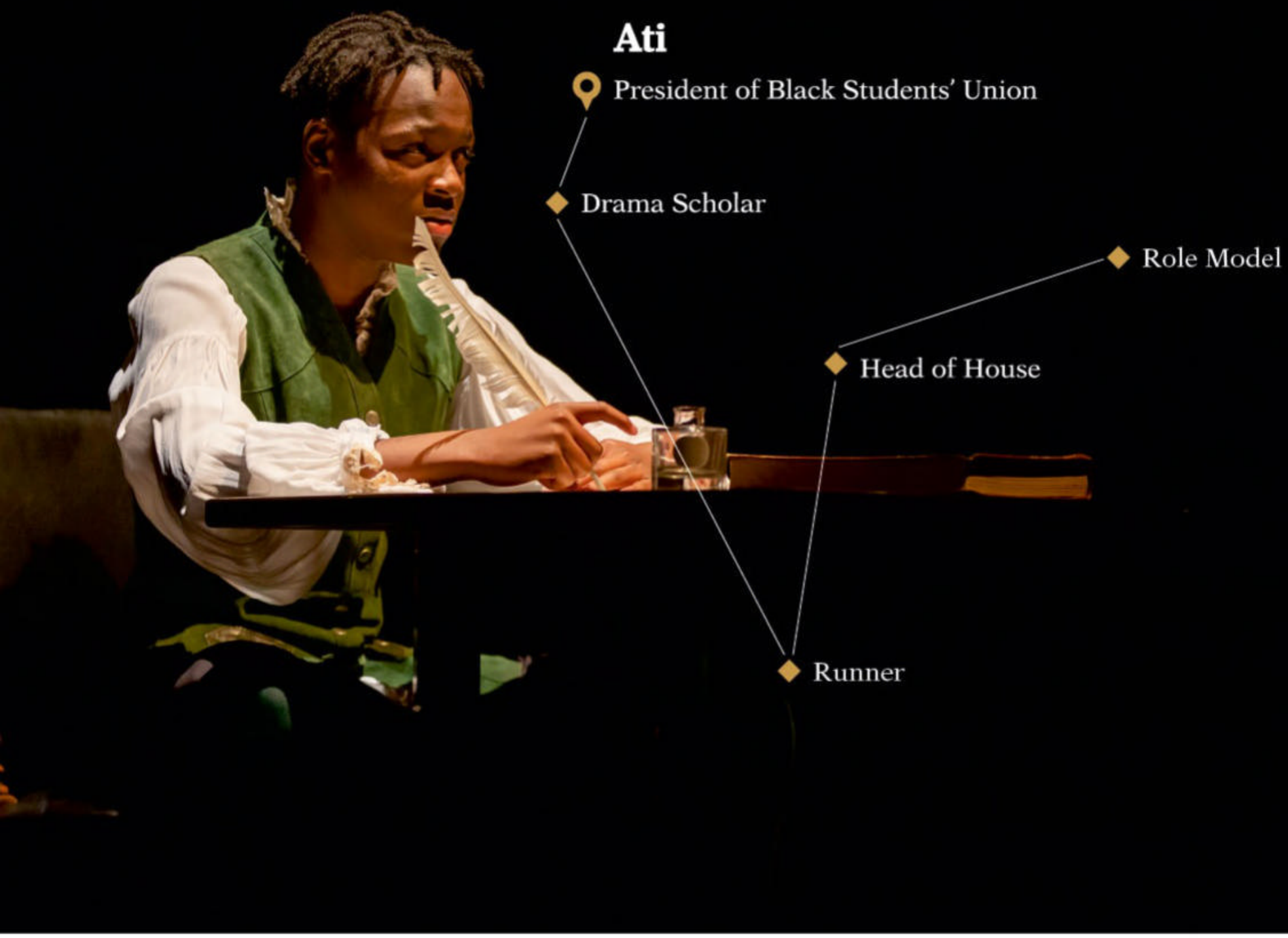
At Magdalen College, Wilde entertained fellow students by taking his pet lobster for walks on a silver chain, yet the great aesthete fell afoul of the authorities for the distinctly humdrum offence of tardiness, returning to Oxford three weeks after the start of term. Duly suspended, he emerged from the wilderness and recovered his poise admirably, going on to gain a double first in Classics and carry off the Newdigate Prize for Poetry.

Another Magdalen College poet was altogether less successful academically. During his university days, John Betjeman was noted for always carrying a teddy bear he’d named Archibald Ormsby-Gore. Evelyn Waugh took it as the inspiration for Sebastian Flyte’s teddy Aloysius in *Brideshead Revisited*. Betjeman’s tutor C. S. Lewis was less impressed: he hectored the future Poet Laureate, labelling him an ‘idle prig’. Betjeman was rusticated after failing his Divinity exam for a second time. He returned only to be sent down for good after a poor show in the pass exam, for which he had proposed entering a paper in Welsh, despite barely speaking the language.

‘Oscar Wilde entertained students by taking his pet lobster for walks on a silver chain’







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Interiors

Character building

How do you make a newly built space look like an old one? The transformation of a house on the Cornish coast, by HÁM interiors, may provide the answer, believes **Arabella Youens**

SITUATED in one of north Cornwall's most desirable locations—between the restaurants of Padstow and the watersports of Harlyn—Atlanta in Trevone has been in Jess Alken-Theasby's family for generations. Two beaches, one sandy, the other rocky, lie seconds from the house, which was built on a clifftop in 1899. Mrs Alken-Theasby's great-grandfather was the artist J. H. C. Millar, a favourite of George V, who painted the views that can be enjoyed from almost all aspects of the Victorian main house and a further four apartments. 'The exception is this building,' explains Mrs Alken-Theasby. 'It only has a glimpse of the sea, so we knew we had to do something different with the interiors.'

When her great-uncle bought the guest house in the 1950s, the building was used as a shelter for boats and for mending crabbing nets. With her husband, Ash, she set out to bring it back to life. Today, thanks to the work of brother-and-sister interior designers Kate and Tom Cox, of HÁM Interiors in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, it has been has been bought back to life as the Net Loft. The family now regard it as Atlanta's 'eccentric relative'. With two bedrooms, a large living room, an outdoor dining terrace and cinema room (ideal for those all-too predictable wet Cornish days), the revamped former outbuilding sleeps four.

HÁM Interiors was known to the couple long before the project to overhaul all the guest rooms at Atlanta began. 'We'd followed other projects and been a regular customer at Studio HÁM, its retail offshoot,' says Mrs Alken-Theasby. 'Then we decided to see what the company could do when given what was, in essence, a blank canvas, such as the Net Loft.'

'The first thing to do when approaching a new building that has little or no existing →

Top brass: the kitchen splashback, drawer pulls, handles and taps will age gracefully

Left: **Ducks and geese adorn the main bedroom, with its cabin bed.** *Right:* **Restored-cheeseboard flooring helps transform the interior**

architectural details or character is to imagine a narrative,' says Mr Cox. 'We came up with this idea of it being home to an eccentric sea captain.' The floorplans had been designed by architects Harrison Sutton and construction undertaken by the couple's own company, Alkenby, but the success of this project lies in the level of detail introduced by HÁM. Together, they make the Net Loft seem as if it has been around forever. 'You don't have to stop and stare for long in any of the rooms before noticing something new,' says Mrs Alken-Theasby.

'Neither Kate nor I wanted to overemphasise the seaside location, which is so easily overdone,' explains Mr Cox. 'Nor did we ignore it entirely. The walls of one room are decorated with wooden ducks and geese, but downstairs, in the cinema room, we've steered away from a strict nautical theme by hanging a painting of a cowgirl on horseback. Fortunately, Jess gave us complete creative freedom.'

An example of how determination in getting the details right can transform an interior lies in the flooring. The timber boards in the main living room were originally cheeseboards from a maker in Somerset and were used to carry the wheels of cheese around the factory. Each one was restored and oiled before it was laid to Mr Cox's exacting expectations. 'I'm a bit of an obsessive when it comes to this sort of thing. I like to use reclaimed flooring in projects; it immediately removes the new from a newly built space.'

The next tip is to consider the interior architecture. The walls of the Net Loft are almost entirely clad in shiplap boarding and particular focus was invested in the junctions where walls and sloping ceilings join. 'Others might not consider these elements as important and they are really challenging to get right, but when you're trying to design a space that has that feeling of having always been there, these aspects matter,' adds Mr Cox. 'It's what gives a feeling of quality to the overall space. As the boards are all painted in one colour, they almost disappear, but the impact is still felt, albeit subliminally.'

> 'It only has a glimpse of the sea, so we had to do something different'

Again, the kitchen has that lived-in and eclectic feel, despite being almost brand new. When it wasn't possible to use reclaimed furniture, a paint effect was used on the cabinetry that nods to antique mahogany and a wave detail along the bottom of the cupboard doors points to the sea. Even the extractor fan is a considered piece: instead of a hood, it's set behind an aged-brass grille, a positioning that required quite a technical operation, but the result means it blends pleasingly into the brass splashback. 'Brass is a living material, which is why I like it,' says Mr Cox. It is used prolifically throughout the property, on taps, door handles, light fittings and drawer pulls. 'The whole point of this design is that it will age gracefully. Brass dulls down attractively over time and so will all the fittings.'

Almost all the furniture was sourced by the HÁM team, which specialises in tracking down and reconditioning antiques and salvaged materials, with a leaning away from perfection and formality towards whimsical, naïve and eclectic one-offs that happily show their age. The main double bedroom in the Net Loft has a folksy painted cabin bed. 'We wanted to invoke a feeling of excitement about coming on holiday and there's something about a cabin bed that takes people back to their childhood.'

Amid all this creativity lies a level of comfort that guests expect when renting at this end of the market. The mattresses are from Vispring, the bedding is made of Egyptian cotton, there is a William Holland outdoor bath and superfast Wi-Fi. 'When it comes to designing this space—or any space you might be creating for guests—ultimately, you want them to be comfortable,' adds Mr Alken-Theasby. 'And the best way to do that is to treat it like your own house and decide what you'd like to have if you were going to spend most of your time there. Start from that premise and you can't really go wrong.'

The Net Loft at Atlanta Trevone (www.atlantatrevonebay.com); HÁM Interiors (01491 579371; www.haminteriors.com)

Oliver Grahame Photography; Alexander James

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The meaning of home

Join COUNTRY LIFE at London Design Week 2024 at 3pm on March 13 to hear two leading designers discuss the rise of individuality in interior design

The sitting room of the Dorset home of Flora Soames, which features in her new book, *The One Day Box*, published by Rizzoli

FOUR years ago, the pandemic encouraged many of us to re-evaluate the role that our homes play in our lives. For some, it precipitated a desire to create spaces that reflect our own personalities, rather than chasing passing trends, kickstarting one of the most exciting periods in interior design since the post-war period, with a new spirit of confidence and a desire to create individual homes with a sense of permanence that suit our needs. In this thought-provoking discussion at London Design Week, two eloquent advocates for a distinctive personal style will reflect on the concept of home and the people, places and objects that have shaped their unique approaches.

Kathryn Ireland, the British interior designer based in California, US, whose client list includes Steve Martin and David Mamet, will discuss the changing role of the home with fellow designer Flora Soames and COUNTRY LIFE's Executive Editor, Giles Kime. Both designers will also be signing copies of their new books.

Spring's unmissable interiors event will also offer opportunity to explore the new collections of furniture, fabrics, wallpaper, lighting and accessories from leading interiors brands, including Julian Chichester, Vaughan, Hector Finch, David Hunt Lighting, Modern British Kitchens, G. P. & J. Baker and Colefax and Fowler.

Kathryn Ireland (*left*) and Miss Soames (*right*) will share their stories of design

Time 3pm
Location Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, Lots Road, London SW10
Tickets £10, to book, telephone 020–7225 9166 or visit www.dcch.co.uk

Simon Upton; Mikhail Lifshitz

Making light work

The secret to any successful interior is an artful balance of decorative and architectural lighting that is not only useful, but also beautiful. Next month, there's a chance to join COUNTRY LIFE at **Hector Finch's** new London showroom to hear three leading designers share the secret of getting it right

LIGHTING doesn't simply play a practical role in a space, but will also transform its look and feel at the flick of a switch. On Monday, March 11, from 1.45pm-2.45pm, Hector Finch, of the eponymous decorative lighting company, interior designer Emily Todhunter and architectural-lighting expert Sally Storey will discuss their different disciplines and how they can be combined to transform mood as well as offering the best illumination for the practicalities of daily life. In particular, they will offer advice on choosing and using lights as a decorative device, including on positioning and employing lighting to manipulate the appearance of a space and highlight its key features.

The panellists share a huge depth and breadth of knowledge and expertise in the subject. Drawing from his background dealing in antique light fittings, Mr Finch has a wide knowledge of historical lighting, which informs his extensive collection that sells all over the world. Today, he is an authority on the history of early electric lighting, as well as the craft and design skills required to create high-quality lamps, pendant lights and chandeliers. Miss Todhunter is one of the world's leading interior designers and Ms Storey is an acknowledged expert in architectural lighting, who has worked on a diverse range of projects, from the London offices of Goldman Sachs to Claridge's and the Connaught hotels and high-profile residential projects.

When Monday, March 11, 2024
Time 1.45pm–2.45pm
Where Hector Finch, 3rd Floor, Design Centre East (020–7731 8886), Chelsea Harbour London SW10 0XE
Entry Entry is free

Left: **Lucia rise and fall pendant light.** *Above:* **Lighting can be used as a decorative device**

Left to right: **The esteemed panellists: Hector Finch, Emily Todhunter and Sally Storey**

Luxury Notebook

Edited by Hetty Lintell

Put 'em up

Every Wills marquee—designed and made in North Yorkshire—is the culmination of hundreds of hours of deeply dedicated work by a team of crafts-people. The tentmaker's art is an old one, with an oral tradition of inherited skills passed down through gene-rations, and the company's primary aim is simple; to handmake the most beautiful tents in the world. Named after their son, Will (involved from the start), Wills was founded in 2010 by husband-and-wife team Chris and Lynsey Brawn, who will work with you and your ideas to create a magical place for celebration (01423 339915; www.wills-marquees.co.uk).

In the frame

I have featured British sustainable eyewear company Monc a few times recently, but wanted to tell you more. Founder Freddie Elborne's background is in engineering, and the company is among the first to craft frames from bio-acetate, offering mineral glass lenses for superior durability. If you sit on your specs (or if, like mine, they get half mauled by the dog), Monc provides a repair and refurbishment ser-vice, extending the life of your frames. Avoid a style mishap with the home try-on service, too. £240 (020–3532 1121; www.monclondon.com).

Given the boot
Le Chameau has launched these elegant New Black Boots, which might have countryside traditionalists up in arms—black Wellies! But they are, I am happy to report, incredibly flattering and comfortable. In a first for the brand, each of its classic styles is available in black, with black lining, too. Get them nicely muddy and you'll look the part—and if I was a 'Wellingtons in London' kind of gal, I would wear these. From £140 (01572 772444; www.lechameau.com)

The Italian hob

STANLEY TUCCI'S suave Italian ways are endlessly alluring and, now, we can be charmed by him in our kit-chens, too, with his colla-boration TUCCI by GreenPan, exclusively available at Fortnum & Mason. Made in Italy, the pans are not only beautiful (hang, don't keep in the cupboard), but also feature a cutting-edge Plasma Tech treatment with GreenPan's ceramic non-stick—meaning PFAS-free with life-long durability. Fortnum & Mason will stock the Stainless Steel, Aluminium Venetian Teal, Carrara White and Milano Black, all with a Piazza Grey interior. *Bellissimo*. From £199.95 (www.fortnumandmason.com).

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Luxury Notebook

Feels like heaven

The serene world behind the doors of HVN (pronounced haven) on London's Knightsbridge, SW1, is designed for ultimate wellbeing. Tense muscles soon yielded to the new (and exclusive to HVN) Hydrobed, basking in the cocooning sensation of the heated waterbed, at the same time as being soothed, scrubbed and wrapped. Next came a gentle facial, and, as I was still ensconced on my floaty mattress drifting off to birdsong—here comes the clever bit—the bed became a bath. Showered and washed without moving a muscle by the expert hands of my holistic therapist, the bed drained away the water and my stresses with it. The result? An hour and a half of utter relaxation—as close as you can get to melting into a cloud, restoring your glow both inside and out. The perfect treat for worn-out bodies and souls. Alqvimia Oasis of Serenity £375 for 90 minutes (020–7160 0003; www.the-hvn.com). *EE*

French kiss

This is one frog I would happily kiss. Cassandra Goad's new solid-gold Frog Fontaine Diamond Necklace Pendant, £3,260, is inspired by the glorious frog sculptures in the gardens and grottos of Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte in France. As part of the jeweller's La Belle France collection, the frog has twinkling diamond eyes and a bigger diamond in its mouth—a conversation starter and an heirloom the grandchildren will be fighting over, £3,260, chain from £660 (020–7730 2202; www.cassandragoad.com).

Luxury under £25

DEODORANT isn't really a luxury, is it? That's until you meet AKT balm (founded by two actors), which is natural, eco and actually works—a dry miracle.

One tube lasts up to three months, doesn't stain clothes and you can use it on your face, too—useful for long-suffering chaps in a suit and tie at a summer wedding.

This Amber, Violet and Tonka scent is divine (they are all unisex and there's a fragrance-free version) and I genuinely look forward to using it. £21 (www.aktlondon.com).

Animal magnetism
I recently saw the first chapter of De Beers's Forces of Nature collection in the flesh and was mesmerised. Each of the eight rings is inspired by a majestic animal native to southern Africa and features a whopping central stone alongside clever jackets and layers that build the designs. Prices on request (www.debeers.com)

Divine Day Photography; Kieran Liggins Photography

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A few of my favourite things

Jane Churchill

As the great-niece of Nancy Lancaster, Jane Churchill grew up surrounded by good taste. Her fabrics and wallpapers made her a household name in the 1980s and she now runs her interior-design practice from London's Pimlico Road. Her interiors cookbook *Entertaining Lives* was published in 2021 and she has recently designed a collection of lamps and candlesticks with The Lacquer Company.

Words by Hetty Lintell. Illustrations by Ollie Maxwell

▼ My house is full of treasures that I have discovered in the strangest of places, but I do love a particular chair in my bedroom that I found at a little Parisian *brocante* years ago. It happened to have my initials on it, so it would have been rude not to buy it. Of course, it's far too precious to sit on.

◀ The one piece of jewellery I wear every single day is my tortoiseshell ring by Venyx. A very special gift, it's been with me for more than 20 years of outfits, occasions and design jobs—I couldn't be without it. It's a Madagascan turtle who carries the world on his back and I must have sold at least five from my finger (020–3096 1390; www.venyxworld.com).

▶ I long for office birthdays to come around so we can all indulge in an M&S Extremely Chocolatey Party Cake. It tastes as if it's homemade. Going overboard with the filling makes it delightfully squishy—a real Bruce Bogtrotter cake. One of my team requested a carrot cake for their birthday once and I was so horrified, we had to have both. I rather wish I'd put it in my cookbook *Entertaining Lives*, but I don't think I'd have got away with pretending it was a 'Two Nancys' recipe.

Alamy

Leaving a legacy

With inflation pushing a growing number of estates into the inheritance-tax regime, it pays off to consider its impact and take the right advice

Most assets will be assessed for inheritance tax at 40%, so it is important for families to understand the implications of different choices

IT'S never too early to start planning for the future, especially when it comes to financial matters. If you want to leave a legacy to your children, it's important to consider the impact of inheritance tax.

> 'Gifts from excess income qualify for tax relief'

The inheritance tax nil-rate band has been frozen at £325,000 since April 6, 2009, and the threshold is set to remain frozen until April 5, 2028. According to the Office for Budget Responsibility*, this will drag almost 50,000 extra estates into the tax regime each year. The total tax collected is projected to jump from £5.1 billion in 2019–20 to £8.4billion in 2027–28.

Most assets in an estate will fall within the realm of being assessed for inheritance tax at 40%, although some, such as family-owned businesses, some qualifying shares listed on the AIM market and farmland, will attract tax relief. Gifts from excess income also qualify for relief and there's an annual limit of £3,000 for small one-off gifts.

If you want to leave a substantial gift, you need to survive seven years for it to fall outside of your estate, with the tax relief tapered over this period. Further, if more than 10% of an estate is left to charity, the tax rate drops to 36% and there's a £175,000 nil-rate band on primary residences if left to direct descendants, although this is reduced if the estate is worth more than £1 million.

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**https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/tax-by-tax-spend-by-spend/inheritance-tax*

The contents of this article do not constitute a personal recommendation or advice. It is important to consult a professional adviser before taking any action. Tax treatment depends on the individual circumstances of each client and may be subject to change in future. All statements concerning tax treatment are based upon our understanding of current tax law and HMRC practice and can be subject to change.

Off the cuff

Elegant wrist watches with blue dials are showcased against fine gentlemen's shirts and beautiful ladies' summer jackets

Styled by Hetty Lintell. Photographed by Paul Zak

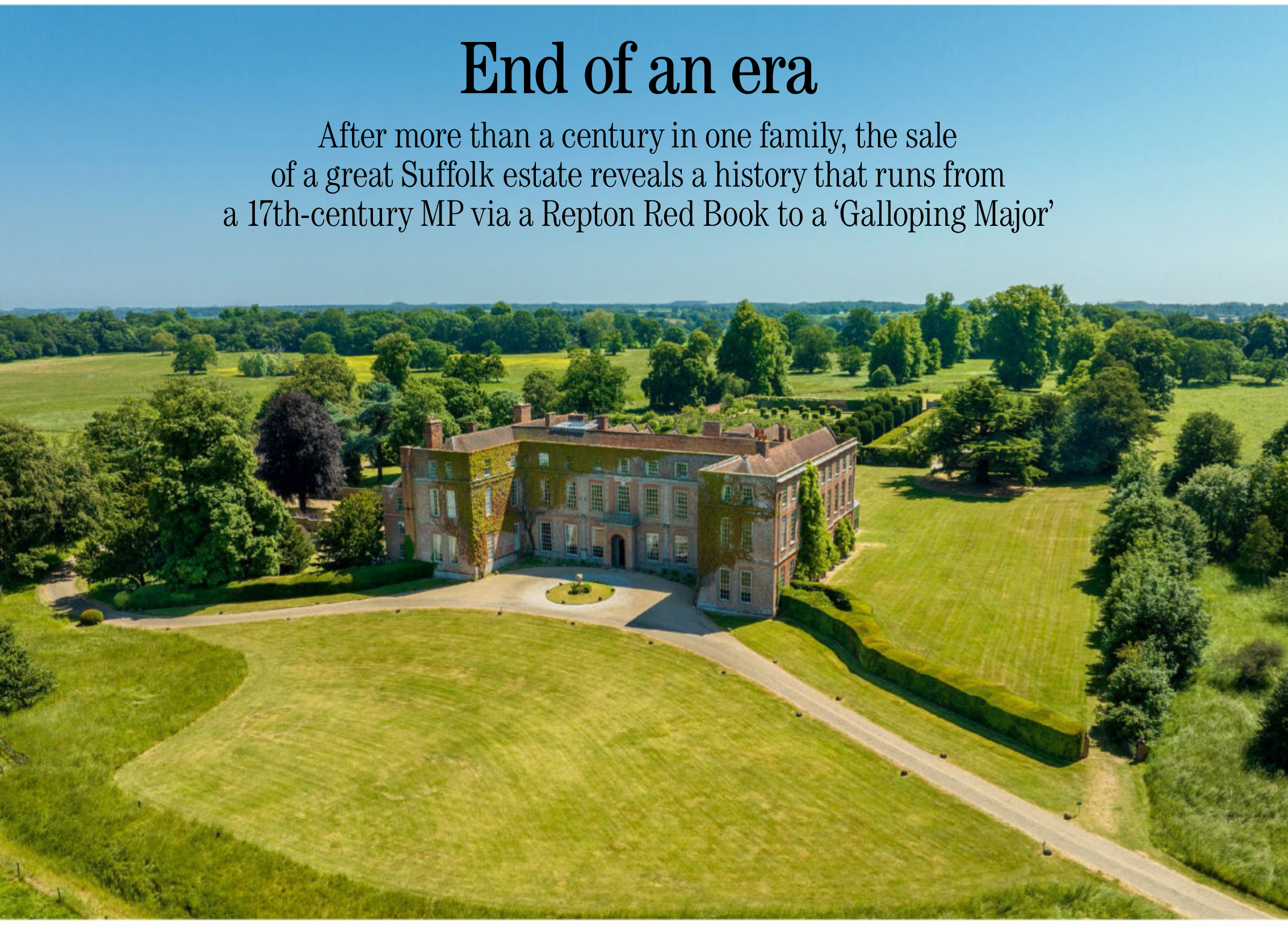
Overseas Chronograph in pink gold, £76,500, Vacheron Constantin (020–7578 9500 www.vacheron-constantin.com); **Villeret, Quantieme Complet Moon phase** in red gold with blue dial, £23,700, Blancpain (020–7529 0910; www.blancpain.com); **Premier B01 Chronograph,** £7,150, Breitling (020–7499 8596; www.breitling.com)
Shirts: **Various,** £280, Emma Willis (020–7930 9980; www.emmawillis.com)

Ballon Bleu de Cartier, £11,400, Cartier (www.cartier.com); **Ladies Twenty~4 Automatic Ref 7300/1200A-001** in steel, £25,230, Patek Philippe (www.pragnell.co.uk); **Rendez-Vous Moon** in white gold, £52,000, Jaeger-LeCoultre (020–3402 1960; www.jaeger-lecoultre.com)
Jackets: **Turquoise jacket** with fringe edging, Carrie, £899; **Sky Blue featherweight jacket** with pastel over-checks, Carrie, £999, both Lalage Beaumont (020–7584 9977; www.lalage beaumont.com); **Eton coat,** linen, £1,790, Favourbrook (020–7499 1921; www.favourbrook.com)

Penny Churchill

End of an era

After more than a century in one family, the sale of a great Suffolk estate reveals a history that runs from a 17th-century MP via a Repton Red Book to a 'Galloping Major'



Grade-I listed Glemham Hall, Suffolk, is set in a 1,763-acre sporting and farming estate, with 183 acres of Grade II-listed parkland. £19m

TODAY sees the launch onto the market—for the first time in 101 years—of the historic 1,763-acre Glemham Hall estate. On the outskirts of Little Glemham, it is seven miles from Aldeburgh on Suffolk's magical heritage coast, eight miles from Woodbridge and 14 miles from the county town of Ipswich. Tim Fagan of Strutt & Parker (01473 220449) quotes a guide price of £19 million for the estate with its Grade I-listed mansion house set in some 200 acres of formal gardens and parkland with frontage to the River Alde, in-hand and let farms, a farmhouse and cottages, which is offered either as a whole or in its constituent parts.

Although the Glemham family of east Suffolk were already established as landowners in the area from the early 15th century, they didn't acquire Little Glemham until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1540s. According to *The History of Parliament* (1604–29), Thomas Glemham of Glemham Hall substantially enlarged the estate by purchasing former monastic lands, thereby turning the family into important east Suffolk landowners.

An article in COUNTRY LIFE (*January 1, 1910*) attributes the building of 'this delightful sample of our Early Renaissance style' to Thomas's son, Sir Henry Glemham, who married a daughter of Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset and Lord High Treasurer, thanks to whose patronage Sir Henry became the first member of his family to sit in Parliament. He died at Little Glemham in 1632 and was succeeded by his son, Sir Thomas, a career soldier who was described on his death in 1648 as 'a gentleman of noble extraction and a fair but impaired fortune', which resulted in the eventual sale of Glemham to the North family, later Earls of Guilford, in 1708.

Between then and 1722, a young Dudley North remodelled Glemham Hall, although, according to COUNTRY LIFE, 'the illustrations show that at the back of the house little alteration was made to the old hall beyond replacing the more important mullioned windows with sashes. Those in the attics remained unchanged on this elevation and so did the gables above them. But the main entrance front was given a full Palladian flavour, and a very dull attic storey was raised up in brickwork entirely to hide the roof. The porch and bays were removed and long lines of sash windows inserted. Inside, the older hall was retained, but the screen was replaced by four fluted Corinthian columns and the walls wainscoted with the large panels then in vogue, and painted

white. A portion of the wall at the back was also removed, so that a great archway connects the hall with the staircase'. Enclosed formal gardens were created with oak and lime avenues to the north and south.

In 1789, Dudley Long North inherited Glemham Hall and, two years later, commissioned Humphry Repton to produce a Red Book. Many of the suggestions he made for the landscape, if not the hall, were carried out, including the removal of the old manor house, the filling-in of the moats and the extension of the park to the north beyond the turnpike road (now the A12).

> 'With its air of faded opulence, the hall harks back to its heyday between the two World Wars, with more than 20 staff'

Following the early-19th-century remodelling of the park, the North family made relatively few changes to the house, garden or park and, in July 1921, the 8th Earl of Guilford put the 2,900-acre estate up for sale. It was acquired, in 1923, by Capt John Murray Cobbold of the Suffolk brewing family, who, with his wife, Lady Blanche, daughter of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, retained the park and laid out new gardens within the original 18th-century walled and hedged enclosures.

A fine sportsman and an outstanding shot, Capt Cobbold worked in the family brewery between the wars, becoming chairman on his father's death in 1929. A lifelong supporter of Ipswich Town football club, he financed the club's transition from amateur to professional status in 1938–39; his wife, Lady Blanche, would become the only woman president of a major football club. Wounded in France in 1917, Capt Cobbold re-joined the Scots Guards in 1939 and was killed, aged 47, when a V-1 flying bomb hit the Guards Chapel, London SW1, during Sunday morning service on June 18, 1944; more than 100 worshippers died that day.

Lady Blanche lived on at Glemham Hall until her death, aged 89, in 1987, whereupon the estate passed to her son, Patrick. When he died suddenly in 1994, he left the estate to his nephew, Maj Philip Hope-Cobbold, who was born at Glemham Hall in 1943 and died in 2020; his son, Tom, inherited and lives at the hall with his wife and family.

The rear of the hall retains its Elizabethan roofline, overlooking 15 acres of gardens

Affectionately known as 'The Galloping Major', Hope-Cobbold was a distinguished soldier, a larger-than-life character with a wicked sense of humour, who was the last of the Cobbolds to serve on the board of his beloved Ipswich Town football club.

With the family brewery long gone, the new custodian, with his wife, Raewyn, who predeceased him in 2016, embarked on a series of corporate, social and cultural events in order to finance the upkeep of the 34,000sq ft hall, which boasts seven main reception rooms, a conservatory, 12 main bedrooms, five dressing rooms, 19 attic rooms (the former servants' quarters), kitchens, domestic offices and extensive cellars. Weddings, christenings, funerals, wakes, barbecues, Sunday lunches and guided tours of the house, with a hilarious running commentary from the Major himself, were all grist to the mill; the annual FolkEast heritage and music festival was the icing on the cake.

With its air of faded opulence, the hall harks back to its heyday between the two World Wars, when 20 or more staff and an army of gardeners looked after the imposing main house and its 15 acres of gardens. Today, surrounded by 183 acres of Grade II-listed →

Above: **Inner Gellie House, Fife, retains its 15th- or 16th-century tower and spiral staircase. £1.85m.** *Right:* **The interiors include three main reception rooms**

parkland, Glemham Hall remains the beating heart of a traditional country estate comprising more than 1,000 acres of in-hand land—a mix of arable, river meadow and woodland—a 526-acre let farm with a Grade II-listed, 17th-century farmhouse and seven cottages, with further cottages available if required.

History and heritage in Fife

HAMISH SPENCER-NAIRN of Strutt & Parker's Perth office (01738 567892) is handling the sale of Category A-listed Inner Gellie House, a handsome stone country house with a gate lodge, former stable block and walled garden set in 35 acres overlooking the Fife coast, 1½ miles from the fishing village of Anstruther, 10 miles from St Andrews and 49 miles from Edinburgh. He quotes a guide price of £1.85m for the house, once part of an estate granted in the 15th century to Archbishop James Kennedy, the founder of St Salvator's College, University of St Andrews.

After the reformation, the estate was first rented and later bought by the Lumsdaine family, an association that was to last for almost 500 years. When William Lumsdaine, an officer in the East India Company, died unmarried in 1830, the estate passed to his sister, Mary, who had married the Revd Edwin Sandys, a scion of the Sandys family of Cumberland. Part of the land was split off from the mansion house in 1923 and, in 1970, the Sandys-Lumsdaine family sold the house with the remaining land to Sir Donald MacLean Skiffington, a director of shipbuilders James Brown & Co, who built the first *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth* at Clydebank. Sir Donald died in 1963, after which Lady Skiffington lived on at Inner Gellie until her death, aged 93, in 2004. The house was acquired by the present owner the following year.

Re-fronted in 1740 around a 15th- or 16th-century tower house, with the tower itself, cellars and stone spiral staircase—designed to enable a right-handed owner to wield his sword when advancing or retiring—atmospheric Inner Gellie House is in need of updating. More than 7,400sq ft of accommodation, over three floors, offers three main reception rooms, a snug, kitchen, upstairs sitting room, five double bedrooms and three bathrooms.

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▲ **Dumfries & Galloway, £850,000**

Built in 1884, B-listed The Old Lifeboat Station has been a four-bedroom house since the late 1990s, making the most of its extraordinary setting with its own slipway, direct access to the sea and panoramic views of Auchencairn Bay on the Solway Firth. Offered for sale with contents included, the unique property is accessed via a track off the main driveway of Balcary Tower and has six acres of woodland—carpeted with bluebells every May. The gulf stream-warmed garden is popular with seabirds, garden birds and a local family of red squirrels. 'Vibrant' Auchencairn is the nearest village and the market town of Castle Douglas is a 20-minute drive away. *Galbraith (01556 505346)*

▶ **West Sussex, £3 million**

The largely glass beachfront elevation of four/five-bedroom Concord (*pictured, centre*) gazes straight over The Solent towards the Isle of Wight. The house stands in the coastal village of Bracklesham Bay, with a popular watersports beach and a much-lauded café, Billy's on the Beach. East Wittering, with its butcher, fishmonger and plenty of independent shops, is not far and Chichester is only five miles away. Each of the four bedrooms has a balcony and the master suite adjoins a Jack-and-Jill bathroom. The property's eco credentials include solar panels (recently installed) with battery back-up and ground-source heat pumps. *Strutt & Parker (01243 887143)*

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Properties of the week

Devon, excess £2 million
Over the past four years, this 1940s water tower has been imaginatively converted into a four-bedroom property and, along the way, has featured in *Grand Designs* and *Good Homes* magazines and on the television series *Derelict Rescue*. An open-plan kitchen and sitting/dining room takes up the entire top floor, with an original domed ceiling and three Juliet balconies. The water-tower shaft has been retained and runs through all three floors, culminating in the in-built dining table, where it forms a glass-topped lazy Susan. Another thoughtful touch is in the garden, where an outdoor dining table has been created from The Water Tower's original doors. Panoramic views take in Brown Willy tor, the highest point in Cornwall, Bideford Bay, Saunton Sands and Dartmoor. Set two miles from the picturesque fishing village of Clovelly, the closest beach is at Bucks Mills. *Jackson-Stops (01271 325153)*

Oxfordshire, excess £3.75 million
Orwell House—'a spectacular example of "organic modernism",' say agents—was designed by architect Andrew Herring in 2009 to create contrast and reflection between natural materials, such as plants, water, thatch, oak and stone, with more modern glass and polished concrete. This ethos is even continued in the gardens, designed by multiple RHS Chelsea Flower Show Gold-medal winner Sarah Eberle, where specimen trees and plants sit alongside a Corten-steel garden area and Japanese-slate heated swimming pool. In the village of Sutton Courtenay, it's named for the author George Orwell, who is buried in the churchyard, and, with six bedrooms, six bathrooms and five reception rooms, covers 7,000sq ft of accommodation. *The Country House Department (01865 338300)*

London SE1, £12.95 million
With all the 'quiet luxury' of a New York high rise, combined with the creativity of the Southbank, this three-bedroom duplex penthouse in One Casson Square is one to beat. On floors 35 and 36 of the Squire and Partners development, the London Eye is literally at eye level and the Thames and Jubilee Gardens look like a painting from this height. The penthouse's 3,107sq ft of interiors have been styled by Portia Fox, all the bedrooms are en suite and facilities available to residents include a 25m (82ft) pool, gym and spa-treatment rooms. *Knight Frank (020–7861 1056)*

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New for old

The gardens of Pembury Hall, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent
The home of Mr and Mrs Paul Hilgers

An overgrown garden has been reinvented for a new generation, writes **Tiffany Daneff**, with a new pool house and ingenious reuse of a derelict wing as an outdoor eating area

Photographs by Jason Ingram

AFTER living abroad for several years in Sydney and Amsterdam, Mr and Mrs Paul Hilgers were looking for somewhere to settle and bring up their young family when they discovered exactly the place they were looking for in a quiet rural valley within easy distance of Tunbridge Wells in Kent.

In 2019, they moved into Pembury Hall, which had been built in 1803 and was home for 170 years to the Woodgate family, three members of which were vicars of the 14th-century old parish church of St Peter's a few minutes' walk away. Push open the gate at the far end of the main lawn and a rutted track leads through a dappled tunnel of coppiced hazels and snaking rhododendrons—the same path the clergymen would have taken on their way to morning service. A yew tree—echoing many in the garden—overhangs the iron gate that leads into a small churchyard.

When Hilgers moved here, however, all was overgrown. The gardens and grounds had been neglected for many years with the usual results: 19th-century plantings of *Cupressus leylandii* and rhododendron had become overgrown, knotweed and other persistent weeds had taken hold in the gardens and trees—having been left for decades unchecked—completely blocked the best view over →

The walls of the old kitchen, destroyed in a fire in 1947, make a sheltered eating spot

Top: **Pembury today with its new pool house and terraces.** *Above:* **The old pool house was out of scale and quite wrong for this garden**

Lloyd Brunt Outdoor Design

meadows to the distant tree line beyond. So much will be familiar to anyone who has grappled with an old garden, but Pembury had suffered further damage. In 1947, a fire destroyed the right wing of the house, leaving only a few brick walls standing windowless and derelict at the back of the building. Almost worse than this, or at least more of an eyesore, was the pool house that had been installed more recently at the far end of the swimming pool. Possibly the most unhappy aspect of this glass-and-concrete box was the way it was sandwiched into a steep wedge of grass bank. Instead of the main lawn looking out over rolling meadow, it was dominated by this unnatural and overbearing presence.

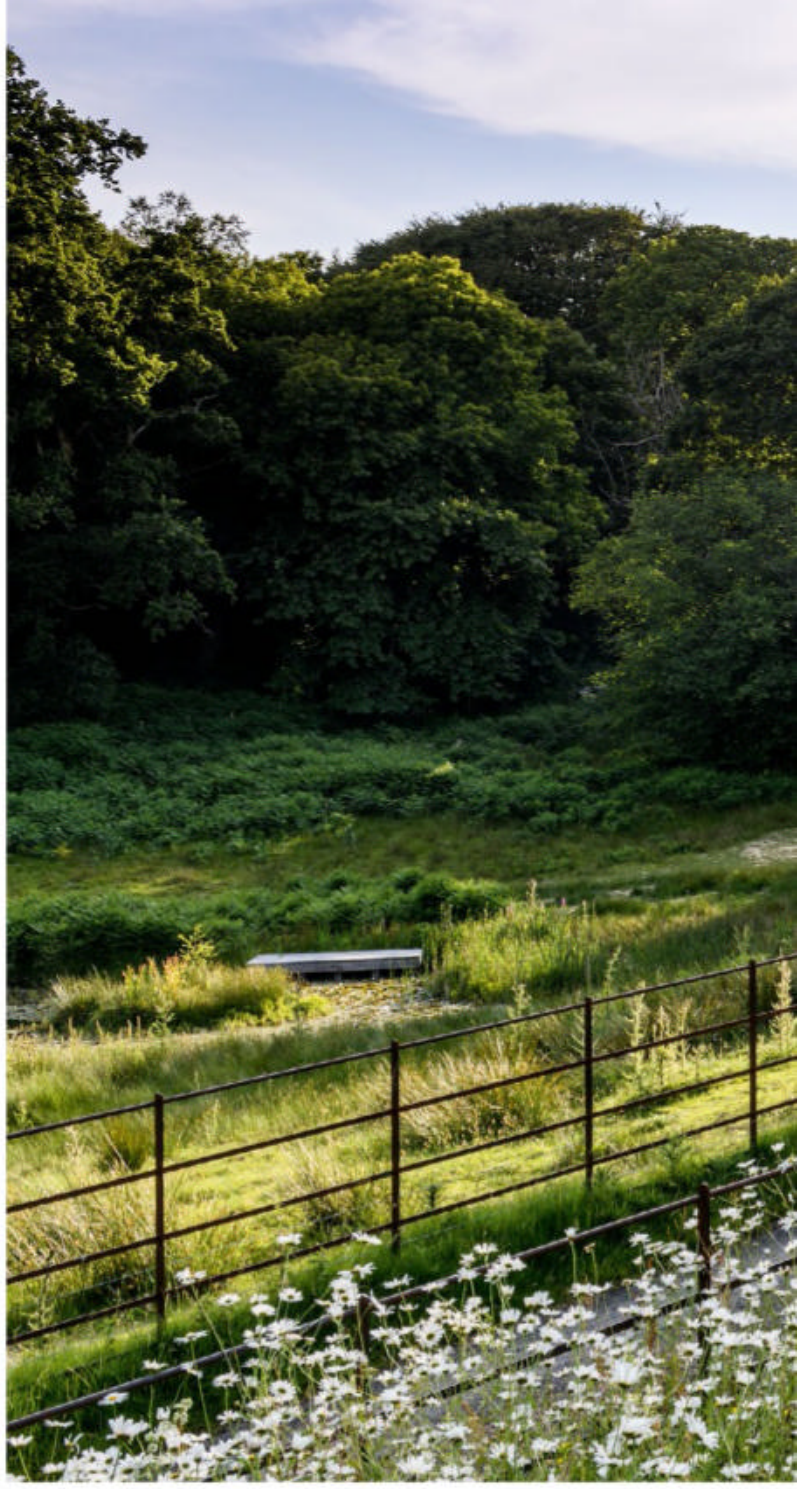
Thankfully, Mr and Mrs Hilgers could see beyond all this and they asked the landscape designer Graham Lloyd-Brunt to make a garden that 'captures the beauty of the countryside, but with a modern twist'. The next few years were devoted to clearing unwanted trees and shrubs, removing a series of heavy yew columns that obscured much of the house, building new paths and laying walls to make sense of the whole garden. Yews are still dotted throughout, but now they are interpreted as light-hearted topiary tiers and smooth contemporary tumps, with a few trained as hedges and specimen trees—providing a unifying theme that echoes the garden's past. New paths of brick and gravel in the wider garden and Yorkstone around the house, with channels for drainage and grooves, make for easier wheelbarrowing. It has been a lot of work, but the results are more than worth it.

In the grounds below the house, the trout pool and stream that run along the bottom of the valley were dredged and several trees removed to open up the view. In clearing the ground of nettles, thistles and dock, the Hilgers uncovered bluebells and bracken. The house was now clearly visible from the meadow and vice versa. But what to do with the boundary that slopes steeply below the main lawn and runs beside the drive? On arrival, this is the first sight any visitor gets of the house, so it needed to be confident, but subtle, too, so that it fitted into the valley.

'The planting of the rhododendrons,' says Mrs Hilgers, 'was drawn from looking at historic photographs of the house—and we tried to bring it back to the original.'

In all, 125 rhododendrons have been planted and, for three weeks, they are a riot of colour, then, for the rest of the year, they provide wonderful structure and glossy leaves. Set in a mix of meadow grasses and wildflowers, they deliver just the right amount of oomph. Rusted estate railings are a nice, simple finish. The trick, however, will be to ensure they are kept from growing so large that they once again eclipse the view.

To the right of the front door, a couple of steps now lead up to a Yorkstone terrace that wraps round the back wall, which has been →



Left: **The Alitex greenhouse in the new potager garden.** *Right:* **Ox-eye daisies flourish on a bank below the main lawn, alongside the lane**

The Yorkstone terrace wraps around the back of the house, planted with spring bulbs and summer perennials punctuated with yew domes

liberated from its dark yew columns and is enlivened with the lighter foliage of wisteria, hazels and hornbeam. In front of the wall are three generous planting beds set with simple fountain bowls. There are pale-pink and lilac tulips and alliums in spring—colours inspired by Dutch gardens—which are followed in summer by loose perennials, such as *Thalictrum delavayi*, *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' and 'Crystal Blue', *Sidalcea* 'Elsie Heugh' and *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Superba', together with phlox for scent and phlomis for structure.

> 'A living roof of hebes helps the new pool house meld into the garden'

The lawn has now been regraded (with French drains dug underneath to remove excess water), so that it runs smooth to its far end, where the woodland has been thinned a little to clarify the mature trees. On the left-hand side, a gentle rise goes up to the swimming pool. Behind this stands the new pool house. Built low, of Belgian-clay bricks, it is discreet yet modern, and a living roof of hebes helps it meld into the garden.

The mood intensifies as you pass through a new gate into the transformation of what had been the derelict remains of the old kitchen following the 1947 fire into what is now a sheltered eating area. The two surviving brick walls have been planted with brilliant green climbers and softened at ground level with newly dug planting pockets of evergreen grass that screen a weathered stone trough into which water trickles from a simple pipe. The insertion of a *trompe l'oeil* mirrored window and a real fireplace make this a wonderfully theatrical outdoor room—with a sturdy, German-made sunshade that can be pulled across from its fitting in the house wall.

The rest of the old wing left an awkward space tight into the hill and the solution here is ingenious—namely to make a small potager garden with a greenhouse. New steps lead up to a walkway of dark Belgian-clay pavers through five large, asymmetric raised beds. A short row of five hornbeams stand against another surviving wall, which has been plastered and colour washed. Uplighters, hidden behind the raised bed and beneath the trees, bring this to life at night. It is not a large area, but there was just enough space for a lean-to Alitex greenhouse, which is set against the same fire-damaged back wall. This had to be strengthened with anchor plates and a new oak beam fixed at the top to support the greenhouse.

Cutting flowers are given more space elsewhere in the garden, which is in the capable hands of Max Clement, the gardener who has been tending all the new trees and shrubs, many of them planted as sizeable specimens and nursed through the recent dry summers and cold winters. A garden, they say, takes seven years to bed in, but already Pembury is giving the family the oasis they had been seeking.

For workshops and events at Pembury, Kent, visit www.pomalo.co.uk

Horticultural black book

Yorkstone from Johnsons Wellfield (www.johnsons-wellfield.co.uk)

Pool umbrella from Tuuci (www.tuuci.com)

Gates from The Garden Trellis Company (www.gardentrellis.co.uk)

Uplighters from the Italian company Simes (www.simes.com)

Lean-to greenhouse from Alitex (www.alitex.co.uk)

Belgian pavers from Vande Moortel (www.vandemoortel-bricksandpavers.com)

Landscape by Lloyd Brunt Outdoor Design (www.lloydbrunt.com)

Tiffany Daneff

Helping hands

MORE years ago than I like to think, when I was wondering where on earth to begin with making something of our London back garden, a 60ft by 40ft rectangle of moss rimmed with a scrappy strip of inert soil pretending to be a flowerbed, the writer and gardener Ursula Buchan gave me some advice I have always remembered. Making a garden, particularly a flowerbed, is one of the most difficult things you can do, she told me, and if someone offers to help you, say yes.

At the time, the designer Mary Keen had very kindly offered her help and she brilliantly transformed the garden by suggesting I made two huge planting beds that would run along either side of a central limestone path. (Yorkstone was out of our price range.) Why not lay a terrace outside the kitchen and lawn at the far end? The even cleverer part was the planting, which was tall and airy and filled with colour and form, offering something in every season. It was beautifully balanced, with an elegant vase-pruned amelanchier, which offered delicate limbs and even more fragile looking flowers. Later, its leaves took on soft autumn colours. There were shrubs, as well as perennials, and I fell in love with *Rosa* 'Mrs Oakley Fisher'. She was a beast with her sharp thorns, but her graceful apricot-orange single flowers with the deep-red stamens were enchanting, especially the way they closed at night. Charles Quest-Ritson, in his *RHS Encyclopedia of Roses*, declares her to be the finest of the Single Flowered Hybrid Teas so popular in the 1920s. Quite right, too.

Shades of inspiration: the long, deep borders at Coton Manor in Northamptonshire are a source of endless ideas for gardeners

It never ceases to astonish me the way garden designers visualise how something can be changed for the better. More particularly, how they manage to strip away the unnecessary distractions of what is present—some hideosity that freezes the ordinary mortal's brain with its apparently intransigent existence—to impose upon grass and soil a three-dimensional apparition.

When I first started mulling over plans for the garden that I now have, trying to feel my way towards uniting the upper and lower parts, it simply never occurred to me that the obvious solution was to create two new beds on the upper grass terrace with a gap between them that held the view to the lower garden and the fields beyond. But it was the work of a moment for the designer James Alexander-Sinclair, whose idea it was. It's as if what is not there exerts a more powerful force on their imaginations than does the actual world.

In her new book *What Makes a Garden* (Frances Lincoln, £35), Jinny Blom makes the case for garden-making being the highest form of all the Arts and Sciences because it brings 'the mutable and immutable materials of the world together' to create a living art form—although, perhaps, such elevation is not always obvious to those with palms calloused from digging and nails stained with soil.

When, in 1991, Susie Pasley-Tyler took over from her mother-in-law the great borders at Coton Manor in Northamptonshire, she developed, through endless learning and discovery, a deep understanding of how plants work. Today, her borders astonish all who visit. Not only by their size—they are immensely long and deep—but because they keep you transfixed throughout. She has a lovely and very personal sense of colour and form, using these in the same way that a composer adapts and repeats a phrase. The results are so satisfying that visitors keep returning throughout the season to watch the borders develop.

Wandering the borders and analysing how they have been put together is one way to understand this mystic art. Another had been to attend the Coton Manor gardening school, sadly shut at present, but, at last, Mrs Pasley-Tyler has put her knowledge down on paper with the publication this month of *Gardening with Colour at Coton Manor*. The supporting photographs by Andrew Lawson are plentiful, as they should be, and very true to the garden, but it is the planting information that makes this a book worth buying for anyone wanting help with their own garden.

> 'Making a garden is one of the hardest things'

I particularly enjoyed the stories about her father-in-law's cousin, the esteemed landscape architect Antony du Gard Pasley (1929–2009), who enjoyed bluntly pointing out the many things he considered wrong at Coton. On his first visit, he gestured with his cane at the wire fence that ran through one border to keep out the rabbits and said: 'Remove this wirescape.' It was a daunting job and took a very long time but, as Mrs Pasley-Tyler recounts: 'Of course, he was right.'

Tiffany Daneff is Gardens Editor of COUNTRY LIFE

Next week **Bitter leaves**

Horticultural aide-mémoire

Start dahlias

Like Sleeping Beauty, your dahlias have lain forgotten in the dark for 100 years. Retrieve them now from their winter quarters and prompt them into action. Bring them into a frost-free glasshouse. Prop them up, carefully retaining their labels, into boxes, surround them with some loose spent compost and water. Soon the green shoots will show and the process of potting and propagating can begin. There is no great urgency yet, as these processes take time, but warmth, light and water will do their work for now, before the great display in the second half of summer. **SCD**

Clive Nichols; Getty

David Salisbury

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Kitchen garden cook Celeriac

by Melanie Johnson

Braised beef short rib with celeriac-and-Parmesan mash

Ingredients

Serves 4

A splash of olive oil
8 beef short ribs on the bone
1 onion, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
6 cloves garlic, smashed but unpeeled
1 red chilli, halved
1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
100g brown sugar
1 cinnamon stick
2 star anise
500ml red wine
750ml beef stock

For the mash

2 celeriacs
75g butter
100ml milk
40g Parmesan, grated

Method

- Heat a heavy-based casserole dish and add a splash of olive oil. Brown the beef all over for a few minutes and then simply add in all the remaining ingredients. Stir them together, pop on a lid and cook in the oven for 2–2½ hours, stirring halfway through.
- Make the mash by peeling the celeriacs and cutting them into even-sized pieces. Steam or boil until soft and then add to a processor with the butter, milk and Parmesan. Process until smooth. Taste for seasoning and set aside until ready to serve.
- Remove the ribs from the casserole dish, cover to keep them warm, and then strain the liquid into a saucepan to reduce and thicken, discarding the herbs and vegetables. Simply simmer until it is the desired thickness.
- Spoon the celeriac-and-Parmesan mash onto plates, add the short ribs and pour over the sauce. Serve with steamed cavolo nero.

‘Often overlooked, earthy celeriac has subtle celery notes, but works well with strong flavours’

More ways with Celeriac

Celeriac, hazelnut and herb-stuffed chicken breast

Mix one grated celeriac with a handful of breadcrumbs, a handful of grated Parmesan, seasoning and a tablespoon each of chopped rosemary, thyme and hazelnuts to make a stuffing. Take four large chicken breasts and cut a slit in their sides to create a pocket, fill the pockets with the stuffing and wrap with Parma ham to enclose the pocket. Heat a splash of olive oil in an oven-proof pan, brown the chicken breast all over and then remove from the heat. Pour in a glass of white wine, 300ml chicken stock and a thinly sliced onion and surround with any leftover stuffing. Place in a moderately hot oven and roast for 30 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through. Serve the chicken with the pan juices spooned over.

Creamy celeriac salad with crispy-skinned salmon

Slice a peeled celeriac into matchsticks and then squeeze over a lemon. Cover with water and set aside. Whisk together four tablespoonfuls of mayonnaise and two tablespoons of Greek yoghurt with one tablespoon of Dijon mustard and some seasoning. Drain the celeriac and then toss it in the dressing with an apple, also cut into matchsticks. Make the salmon by patting the skin dry and then brushing with olive oil. Add to a hot pan and fry, skin side down, until the skin has crisped. Turn over to cook through. Serve the rémoulade with the salmon.

Melanie Johnson

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John Lewis-Stempel

I left my soul there, down by the sea

On a dull February morning, **John Lewis-Stempel** is consumed by childhood memories of the allure of the seashore, from the rhythmic, cresting waves and slippery seaweed of all shapes and hues to the shell-studded sand

Illustration by Michael Frith

IS it the salt? The reason that seaside memories are so perfectly kept? My very first memories are absolutely brine-preserved. I was a toddler sent to stay with my Great Uncle Willi and Great Aunt Kath, who were sheep farmers on the Gower, Wales, their land sloping down to the sea. Although I realise that the following infant incidents have become recall-polished in the way broken glass is smoothed by sea tide on the sea shore, the grit in them is true…

Standing looking at the cresting waves, thinking that the surf looked like lamb's fleece. (Too sophisticated a simile for a three-year-old; perhaps an image placed in my head by the Great Aunt.) Then taking the bright-red Massey 35 tractor and its wood-sided trailer down to the beach to gather seaweed to be used as fertiliser on the land. On other occasions, I remember taking seaweed home to give to my grandmother, Great Aunt Kath's sister and a farmer's wife herself, so she could use it to divine the weather. Seaweed, hung outside the back door, swelled when rain was due, dried up to signal a more clement climate.

My grandparents had another morning meteorological ritual, Bible-touchingly observed: tapping the barometer in the hall. The weather is a big thing in farming. (Occasionally, my grandparents fell into outright superstition and looked in the newspaper for the Met Office's prognosis.)

You can see where this is going. I do like to be beside the seaside, beside the sea. Yet, for me, the coast is never merely a holiday resort, a bathe in marine blue, a slob-out on a sun lounger. I always have one eye on the seashore's utilitarian utilisation, on what can be used in farming. Thus, no day at the seaside misses a sack or several filled with seaweed to be taken home as fertiliser; this February morning at Portreath being no exception, when the withdrawn sea is battleship grey, smeared by dawn's grease, the low waves a ceaseless shush and the yelping gulls follow aimless circles in the air. Even in Atlantic-facing north Cornwall, not every day blows you away. February's nothingness goes where it wishes, wants.

> 'Even on a dull morning, the interior of the shell shines out, whiter than the sun trying to break through the cloud'

On the zebra-pattern shingle stones between the eastern high cliff and the harbour wall: two brown tide marks of seaweed, mostly the kelp *Laminaria digitata*, with its strappy blades and octopus-sucker holdfast and bladderwrack, poxy bubbled. Seaweeds are successful algae; some of Britain's 800 species have existed in their present form for 600 million years. Bladderwrack is a relative sophisticate; the round air 'bladders' are an evolutionary device, allowing the seaweed to float upright underwater, helping it exchange gases and absorb nutrients when submerged by the sea.

It's early morning, too early for most, and the shore belongs to me, a beachcombing black labrador of my owning and some wandering turnstone waders on the tide edge, their clockwork legs only emphasising the monotony of the sack-filling morning. I collect from the high shore; there is no point gathering soaking-wet seaweed, with its excess weight and salt.

The history of using seaweed as fertiliser is as long as kelp fronds, dating back to Roman times. Sometimes on obscure shores you may still encounter an abandoned, scrub-covered access ramp at the back of the beach from which seaweed was once carted off by horse. Savvy, the old timers, the men like Uncle Willi; seaweed provides sources of potassium, magnesium, iron, zinc, copper, boron and trace elements. Dug into the ground or the manure pile or the compost heap, a little goes a long way to soil-feeding.

Thanks to Uncle Willi, we always used seaweed as a manure additive and my farmer grandfather in landlocked Herefordshire received the agricultural salesmen selling the

commercial seaweed extract Maxicrop with a grin. Why pay good money for something you could collect for free from Rhossili after you had built the stone windbreak on the seaside Bank Holiday outing?

Also, every childhood trip to the seaside required the collecting of a plastic bucket-full of oyster shells, to be crushed at home and given to the chickens. Nothing makes better eggshells than seashells; it's the calcite, the crystal that is the building block of the world. Quite literally. Calcite is the crucial component of limestone, coral, marble and chalk. A hen's egg is about 10% calcite.

She of the famous tongue-twister may sell seashells on the seashore, but we gathered them for free. I still do, although the native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*), the usual shell for supplementing the chicken's diet, is an uncommon mollusc these days. Native oyster populations have declined by 95% in the UK since the mid 19th century and are now predominantly found in the South-East, on the Thames Estuary, the Solent and the River Fal in Cornwall. There are only two oyster shells on the beach this morning, down on the wet, dark sand below the stone, the oval rough shells gaping, the slug-thing that once lived inside long gone. Even on a dull February morning, the interior of the shell shines out, whiter than the sun trying to break through the cloud. Tilted, the inside of the shell lumines, nacreous, pearlescent. To the fingers, the interior of the shell, in contrast to the rock-like exterior, is utterly smooth; it has to be to avoid irritating the skin of the mollusc.

Seashells are one of those small miracles of Nature that we overlook. They do not arrive on the mollusc pre-fabricated, but grow as the animal grows. The growth rings on the oyster's shell, like those in a tree, enable the measuring of age. One of the shells in my hands was five years old, one eight, although the native oyster may live for 15 or so years in the wild.

Some sentiment came over me and I placed the oyster shells back on the beach for others to find or perhaps for the sea to do its thing, to pound them into bits, for the shells to become part of the sand on which I am standing.

Besides, there were plenty more shellfish shells on the seashore.

Twice crowned victor of the Wainwright Prize for Nature writing, for 'Where Poppies Blow' and 'Meadowland', John Lewis-Stempel's latest book, 'La Vie: A year in rural France', is out now (Doubleday, £16.99)

A right royal book

During a trip to Paris, dealer Bernard Shapero chanced upon 'an absolute treasure beyond belief', but he could barely savour the joy of owning it for an hour before it left his hands, as he tells **Carla Passino**

BERNARD SHAPERO was a young dealer with more passion than money when, during a trip to Paris, he came across a manuscript about the French Navy by Guillaume Poncet de la Grave. It wasn't just any book: 'What was so fabulous about it—and why I loved it so much—was that it was bound in the full green morocco of Louis XVI,' he recalls. 'It had been presented by the author to Louis as his own personal copy—the original manuscript in a special binding made for the King, to whom the book was dedicated.'

Louis XVI bound his books in 'wonderful' green morocco and this one had little anchors on the spine, 'because it was about the Navy'. Another, even better surprise awaited Mr Shapero as he opened the volume: the King had subsequently presented it to Marie Antoinette, who had added ornamental linings in red morocco, gilt-stamped with her coat of arms, to the inside covers. 'So it was a gift from the author to the King of France, then from the King of France to his wife—a sort of double provenance.'

Mr Shapero explains that many French books bear the monarch's monogram, 'but they weren't really his; although they had his coat of arms on, they were presentations that he would then give away—sometimes he would do it with 50 or 100 copies. To have one that was actually owned by him and then given to Marie Antoinette…' The dealer almost sighs at the memory.

Double royal provenance, green morocco and gilded anchors: truly fit for a king

Astonished at having found this 'absolute treasure beyond belief', Mr Shapero bought it immediately—but, on the very same day, as he walked around Paris, he bumped into a French dealer he knew and couldn't resist sharing his news: '"Oh, look at this amazing thing I've just bought,' I said, thinking to be clever. And he replied: '"I love it. I love it. You've got to sell it to me."'

Mr Shapero was reluctant: 'Keeping it for a few days or a few weeks would have been nice—having the joy of owning such a thing.' However, his French acquaintance was persistent and, 'being a young dealer and wanting to make money', Mr Shapero agreed to sell: 'I made him a price, which was something like three or four times what I paid for it literally an hour before. He bought it instantly—and I had instant seller's remorse.'

Over the course of the next few decades, Mr Shapero kept thinking wistfully about the manuscript and how great it was: 'It was a book that never left my mind because it was such a little gem.' Then, about 30 years after that fateful Paris trip, he went to New York to view some auctions: 'And there's my book coming up at Christie's. I don't know how it got there. Obviously, the French dealer I sold it to must have sold it to an American [who], I presume, died or was getting rid of that collection, and it turned up at Christie's New York.' Of course, Mr Shapero immediately bought the book again—alas, he confesses, 'for a lot more than I had paid for it previously'.

WEIRD & WONDERFUL

RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898–1967) was a master at creating surreal scenes from ordinary objects and *L'ami intime* (*The intimate friend*, 1958) is a perfect example. The baguette is perfectly crusty, the wine glass crystalline—and both float incongruously behind a bowler-hatted man, one of the Belgian artist's most recognisable motifs. Gazing unaware at a peaceful landscape under a sky dotted with clouds—another of Magritte's themes—the figure represents any man, yet is, enigmatically, someone's close friend.

The painting's provenance is almost as captivating: it belonged to late American entrepreneur Gilbert Kaplan, who, at 40, celebrated his birthday and the 25th anniversary of his business by conducting Gustav Mahler's Second Symphony at New York's Lincoln Center, before embarking on a new career in music. He was equally passionate about art, particularly Magritte's, and *L'ami intime* was in his and his wife's personal collection for more than 40 years.

It is now the highlight of Christie's The Art of The Surreal Evening Sale on March 7. The painting (estimate £30 million–£50 million) will be on pre-sale display on March 1–7 at the auction house's London headquarters (www.christies.com).

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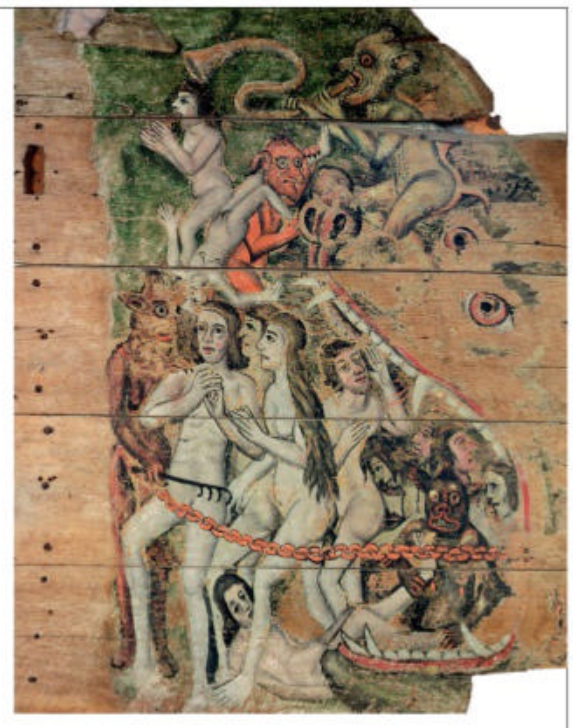
Day of doom



Hell hath no fury like a giant fish. Or so must have thought the man who—as the 15th century ended and the 16th dawned—painted the tympanum in the Church of St Peter in the village of Wenhaston, Suffolk. He imagined that, on Judgment Day, unrepentant sinners would be swallowed by a monster that looked like a cross between a pike and a basking shark endowed with human teeth. Beyond this quirky vision of hell, the Wenhaston Doom is interesting because it's one of the relatively few examples of religious art to survive from Britain's Catholic days. Tudor Protestants, in their iconoclastic fury, tore down the great rood cross that originally stood in front of the artwork, but only whitewashed the Doom. Fast forward several centuries to 1892 and the old tympanum was taken down, possibly to be burned, but, in a bout of Victorian inefficiency, it was left out in the churchyard for some time. The great British weather lent a hand and, under the pouring rain, the white coat of Tudor paint began to wash away, revealing patches of colour, which turned out to be medieval art. The restored Doom still graces St Peter's, its fish ready to sink its teeth into the flesh of the wicked, as the righteous enter Heaven.

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

BRIDGING time and space, Deborah Ogden of antiques furniture shop The Blanchard Collective, in Froxfield, Wiltshire, likes to set off a group of squiggly contemporary vases, hand-blown in the UK, with a chest of drawers from mid 19th-century Sweden. The solidity of the chest is lightened by tapered legs and a lozenge pattern on the top drawer. '[They] complement each other perfectly,' she says, 'the ethereal, delicate glass vases growing upwards, almost plant-like with their vibrant green—a start of something new—against the very grounded, strong design of the chest, pale in colour and with that lovely old feel of a piece well loved and used. Old and new, vibrant and quiet—a match made in heaven.'

Take five: moments in the life of Jasper Johns

A display of nine prints presented from today to May 12 at the Courtauld Institute, 'Jasper Johns; The Seasons', highlights how the passing of time inspired the American artist between 1984 and 1991. The 'Seasons' series (including *Summer, above*) combines an image of his shadow with some of the themes that he has explored during his long career, such as flags. Born in 1930, Mr Johns has bridged movements (Dadaism, Pop Art, Minimalism) and art forms (painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking) with his own ever-evolving language.

1. At the start of his career, he supported himself creating window displays in New York stores

2. In 1954, a dream inspired him to paint the American flag. He destroyed all his previous works and focused on subjects such as flags, targets or letters. He would later switch to cross hatchings, then, in the 1980s, to a more autobiographical style that referenced his possessions and interests

3. His first solo exhibition (in 1958) was a phenomenal success and Alfred H. Barr, Jnr, founder of New York's MOMA, bought three works from the show

4. A friend of composer John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham, Mr Johns designed costumes for the latter's dance company and even a set inspired by French Dada artist Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass*

5. In 2010, Mr Johns's *Flag* (1958) was sold for $110 million, setting a record for the most expensive work by a living artist. It wasn't the first time: a few of his paintings had achieved the same feat in previous years

Artist of the week

The brush of an angel

Although Angelica Kauffman painted royalty, became a founding member of the Royal Academy and gained recognition from Dublin to St Petersburg, she still had to contend with bias even long after her death, as **Matthew Dennison** discovers

AN *Address from Britannia to the celebrated Angelica*, printed in the *Public Advertiser* on January 20, 1767, acclaimed a 20-something Swiss-born painter, who would shortly sign the petition to George III that precipitated the foundation of the Royal Academy (RA). 'What wonderful effects from light and shade!' rhapsodised the poetaster: 'Such colouring was ne'er since Rubens shown.'

The artist in question, known to her British admirers as 'Miss Angel' and to art scholars as Angelica Kauffman, was a young woman acknowledged in her lifetime as a leading portraitist and history painter. In Britain, her champions included Joshua Reynolds and Robert Adam, for whom she contributed to decorative schemes at Harewood House, West Yorkshire, Osterley Park in Middlesex and the Adelphi in London. Within months of her arrival in the capital, she received a prestigious commission from Augusta, Princess of Wales, to paint the King's sister, Augusta, Duchess of Brunswick, and her newborn son, a conventional subject she invested with the 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur' that, →

Kauffman's *Self-portrait of the Artist hesitating between the Arts of Music and Painting*

in 1755, archaeologist and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (whom she also painted) had argued were key to ancient Greek art and belonged at the heart of the emerging neo-Classical movement.

Over time, Kauffmann's eminence was unrivalled. She painted many of Europe's crowned heads, declining Ferdinand IV of Naples's offer of a post as court painter; her friends included Goethe and her French counterpart Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun; she died celebrated and wealthy. But Kauffman was also exposed to gossip and spite; in her first marriage, she fell victim to a fortune-hunting bigamist masquerading as a Swedish count, from whom she separated within a year, and she was routinely belittled on account of her sex. In 1767, the acme of the *Public Advertiser*'s commendations was its verdict that Kauffman's 'tow'ring genius' soared "bove the female kind'. Other observers responded even less helpfully.

> 'Kauffman earned recognition as "possibly the most cultivated woman in Europe"'

Jealousy prompted Irish artist Nathaniel Hone's much-publicised suggestion of an improper relationship between Kauffman and Joshua Reynolds in his painting *The Conjuror;* similar feelings presumably lay behind the caricatures that dismissed Kauffman as 'The Paintress of Macaronis', suggesting that her appeal was confined to the sort of feather-brained poseur associated with the Macaroni Club. Posterity, too, has proved equivocal in its praise, emphasising a feminine quality to her work that former National Gallery director Michael Levey once argued 'lacked moral-cum-artistic force'.

Now, a new exhibition of her work at the RA, of which she was one of only two female founder members, seeks to redress this imbalance, enabling viewers to appreciate grounds for the high regard in which she was previously held, beginning with her election to Rome's prestigious Accademia di San Luca in her early twenties.

Kauffman's art has been described as bridging the gap from Rococo to neo-Classicism, the late-18th-century movement inspired by antique works of art at a time of archaeological rediscovery of the ancient world. In two versions of *Bacchus encountering Ariadne*, the first painted in 1764, the second 30 years later, Kauffman does indeed appear to progress from a recognisably Rococo, Boucher-esque rosy picturesqueness towards something more severely classical, in which Bacchus, Ariadne and attendant cherub all adopt the balletic gestures of ancient statuary. For the most part, works on display at the RA, including *Self-portrait of the Artist hesitating between the Arts of Music and Painting* (1794), appear resoundingly neo-Classical. Although the movement poses challenges for 21st-century viewers, with its focus on Hellenic models and classically derived standards of objective beauty, Kauffman invariably enlivened her frieze-like arrangements of figures through her confident, sometimes unpredictable sense of colour, occasional playfulness and a degree of sentiment.

The RA's exhibition includes portraiture and allegories, together with the grand history paintings depicting scenes from ancient life and literature that Kauffman's contemporaries had previously considered beyond the capacity of women artists. Viewers must decide for themselves if these merit a former dismissal as 'history… seen as a series of sentimental anecdotes… located in a vaguely classical past and acted out by quite sexless people with straight profiles, wearing sandals and plain tunics'—or, indeed, if such a description need in fact constitute a dismissal. In *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, Winckelmann suggested that, in Greek figures, 'as the bottom of the sea lies peaceful beneath a foaming surface, a great soul lies sedate beneath of the strife of passions'. And so it is in many of Kauffman's history paintings. The Cleopatra of *Cleopatra Adorning the Tomb of Mark Antony*, painted in the late 1760s and on loan from

An artist in high regard: a series of high-profile portrait commissions, such as *Portrait of Emma, Lady Hamilton, as Muse of Comedy*, 1791, is an indication of Kauffman's standing

National Trust Images/John Hammond; Mark Asher Photography; Alamy

‘Sedate beneath the strife of her passions’: Kauffman’s Cleopatra lays garlands in tribute to her dead lover in *Cleopatra Adorning the Tomb of Mark Antony*, painted in the late 1760s

Burghley in Lincolnshire, is a woman who has conquered her grief to the extent that she can peaceably absorb herself in the task of garlanding her dead lover’s sepulchre. Decorous in her controlled suffering, Kauffman’s Cleopatra is, as Winkelmann would have her, sedate beneath the strife of her passions.

Kauffman’s success, however, extended beyond her undoubted artistic talents. A child prodigy, she had given up a career as a soprano, in one account on the advice of a priest concerned by the ‘seediness’ of the contemporary opera scene. Fortune rewarded her decision. In a career lasting more than half a century, this quadrilingual child of a moderately successful Austrian muralist earned recognition as ‘possibly the most cultivated woman in Europe’ and, through widespread reproduction of her paintings as engravings, fame from St Petersburg to Dublin; she was elected to the academies of Bologna, Florence, Rome, Venice and London. At her death in 1807, although she had produced little new work in her final decade, her burial was modelled on Raphael’s: two of her paintings were carried in her funeral procession, accompanied by her fellow Roman academicians. It was a remarkable accolade for any artist, especially a woman and a non-native (Kauffman had moved to Rome in 1781, establishing a studio close to the Spanish Steps after her marriage to her second husband, the Venetian painter Antonio Zucchi). And it represented a triumphant vindication for this talented artist, whose success had more than once inspired undue vilification and carping.

‘Angelica Kauffman’ is at the Royal Academy, London W1, from March 1–June 30 (www.royalacademy.org.uk)

Life and times of Angelica Kauffman

October 30, 1741 Born at Chur in Switzerland. As a child, Kauffman (*right*, in a 1787 self-portrait) is encouraged to practise both painting and singing by her father

1753 Paints her first self-portrait in oils, aged 12; begins accepting portrait commissions

1754 Death of Kauffman’s mother, Cleophea Lutz, who had taught her German, Italian, French and English

1757 Accompanying her widowed father on a trip to Schwarzenberg, Kauffman paints a series of wall frescos in a church in which her father is frescoing the ceiling

Late 1750s Father and daughter travel to Italy. Kauffman copies Old Master paintings in a number of distinguished collections. In 1762, in Florence, she first encounters neo-Classical painting; she also paints copies for British Grand Tourists. Early sitters include the actor David Garrick.

1766 After three years in Rome, Angelica arrives in London, where she stays until 1781. Reynolds paints her in 1766

1767 Marries ‘Count’ Frederick de Horn; separates the following year

1768 Signs the petition that leads to the establishment of the RA

1780 She accepts a prestigious commission to paint ceiling roundels for the RA’s rooms in Somerset House. In London years, she also paints scenes from history and subjects inspired by the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*

1781 Following her marriage to Antonio Zucchi, she leaves London for Rome. In Rome, she continues to accept portrait commissions as well as working on historical subjects

1797 Exhibits at the RA for the last time

1805 Accepts her final portrait commission (Ludwig I of Bavaria)

November 5, 1807 Dies aged 66

Huon Mallalieu

You got the silver

Two goblets and a tankard with a history as fascinating as their craftsmanship star at the forthcoming Petersfield Antiques Fair in Hampshire

Fig 1 left: **A Fuller White tankard.** *Fig 2 right:* **A pair of silver goblets. Both with Schredds**

FOR 38 years, Schredds of Portobello, also known as silver dealers George and Bunty Schrager, was a stalwart of the London street market, until the Schragers decided that online trading and more fairs around the country would suit them better (www.schredds.com). The business name, incidentally, came from the combination of their surnames, Schrager and Reddaway. As well as knowledge and love of the subject, they had a further asset, valuable in almost any area of antiques, but especially, perhaps, silver: their son, Luke, is a historian with a particular interest in heraldry. His skill as a researcher is evident in the information that comes with items offered by Schredds and he has set up his own commercial heraldry website, contactable through his parents' site.

He has certainly spent his time profitably on a pair of goblets and a tankard that his parents will show at the forthcoming Petersfield Antiques Fair, at the Festival Hall, Petersfield, Hampshire (March 8–10). The silver goblets with gilded interiors **(*Fig 2*)**, made by George Smith and Thomas Hayter and marked London 1802, were engraved with arms and an inscription from the NCOs and privates of the Stockport Volunteers—raised because of fear of Napoleonic invasion—to their commander, Maj Holland Watson, on the disbanding of the regiment at the 1802 Peace of Amiens. On the resumption of war the following year, a new regiment of Loyal Stockport Volunteers was raised, but commanded by Viscount Bulkeley, which was slightly ironic, as his less-than-loyal father had plotted to raise North Wales for the Jacobites in 1745.

Holland Watson was a leading anti-radical Stockport lawyer; he left the goblets (and a print of himself in elaborate Volunteer uniform) to his son, Hewett Cottrell Watson (1804–81), who became a phrenologist and distinguished botanist and corresponded with Darwin. It is always a pleasure to learn something new when preparing this column. Today, it is his Watsonian system of vice-counties, which divided the country into similarly sized units for biological and other scientific data-gathering and is still used today. The goblets and print will be priced at £6,500.

The pint tankard **(*Fig 1*)**, made by Fuller White of London in 1761, had a supporting role in one of the sadder Victorian sensations and one with a Hampshire connection, the case of the Tichborne Claimant. Roger Tichborne (1829–54) was travelling in South America when he learned that he had become heir to a baronetcy and the estate between Winchester and Alresford that had been in his family since 1135. He boarded a ship to make his way home, but the *Bella* is thought to have sunk off Brazil. His father died in 1862, but his mother, a French lady with a romantic story of her own, refused to believe Roger was dead and advertised widely, including in Australia, which duly produced a claimant. This 'Roger' looked nothing like Roger; fat not slight, he lacked tattoos, could not speak French and got the mother's names wrong, →

Fig 3 left: **A 7½in-high bronze heron by Auguste Cain. £2,400.** *Fig 4 right:* **A silvered-and-gilt-bronze figure of a dancer by Demétre Chiparus. With Hickmet Fine Art**

WILL GREEN at RON GREEN

ANTIQUE DEALER

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but, nonetheless, she accepted him. In 1871, shortly before his first case came to trial, the claimant entered a shooting competition at Egham and won this mug, duly engraved as Sir R. C. D. Tichborne Bt. After a second trial for perjury, he served 10 years in prison, persisting in his claim, although he was probably Arthur Orton, son of a Wapping butcher. He died in 1898. The mug will be for sale at £3,500.

Lovers of Art Deco who are concerned about the ivory ban might look at a large figure of a dancer by Demétre Chiparus (1886–1947), which is in silvered-and-gilt bronze rather than chryselephantine **(*Fig 4*)**. It is priced at £22,500 by Hickmet Fine Art.

When I visited the Mayfair Antiques Fair in early January, it was gratifying to find that several items featured in my preview had sold on the opening evening. The first two days were the best for sales, but, according to the organiser Ingrid Nilson, despite good visitor numbers and some significant sales, there was a general reluctance to spend. One sale by sculpture dealers Garret & Hurst was a 7½in-high bronze heron **(*Fig 3*)** by Auguste Cain (1821–94). He was an animal-and-bird sculptor and was the son-in-law of the great animalier Pierre Jules Mêne; we shall come to one of his sons shortly (*see box*). I am not keen on herons as the frog season begins, but this less lethal example sold at £2,400.

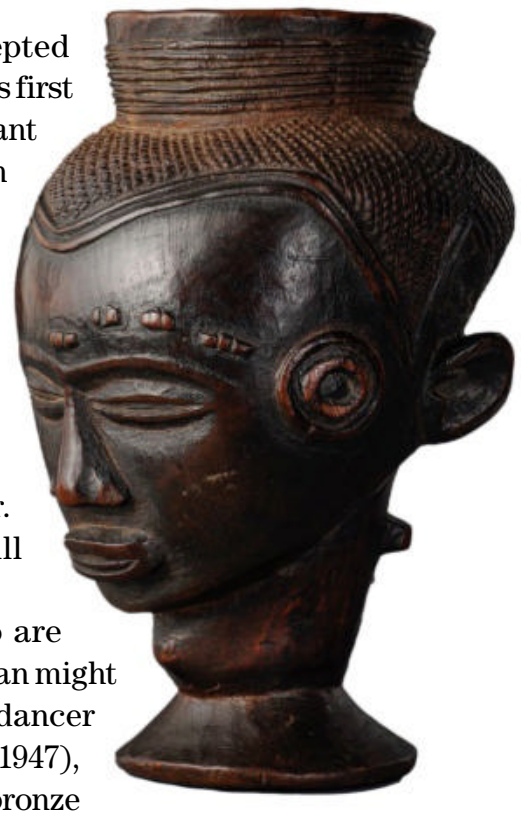

Fig 5 above: **A Congolese ceremonial cup. With Didier Claes.**
Fig 6 right: **A shelf of bottles and dented tins by Johan De Wit. With Francis Maere**

The décor of the BRAFA fair in Brussels later in January looked spectacular, with Surrealist installations by Nicolas de Liedekerke and Daniel Culot of Volume Architecture and clouds by Cloud Studio, which are being reused elsewhere or recycled. It is reported that high overall quality was reflected in strong sales and a record attendance. Among the many items that particularly appealed to me were a Congolese ceremonial cup **(*Fig 5*)** with Didier Claes and two works by Johan De Wit (b. 1960) with Francis Maere. The 6in-high wooden cup from the Kuba people in the Democratic Republic of Congo had a powerful presence and superb patina. Mr De Wit's creations are difficult-to-classify, faintly disturbing illusions of everyday objects. Here, hanging shelves **(*Fig 6*)** of Morandi-like bottles and dented tins turned out to be modelled in paper covered with resins, iron powder and pigment (35½in by 24in).

Pick of the week

The varied fine-art sale at Sloane Street Auctions on February 14 was headed at £58,500 by a painting of many identities. This 75in by 45in portrait of a lady is now said possibly to be of Isabella Andreini (1562–1604) and attributed to Paolo Veronese. When I last saw it, making £23,000 in Christie's 1998 sale at Hackwood House for Lord Camrose, it was late-16th-century North Italian School and the sitter Margaret, Duchess of Parma. In 1968, Christie's had sold it for 750gns for the Earl of Warwick as the Duchess by Veronese and, in the 19th century, the art historian Waagen noted that it was called Titian, 'but conception and colouring' indicated Veronese. All fun for the buyer. Also at Sloane Street was an undistinguished portrait of a gentleman by Auguste Cain's son, Georges, which made £234.

Next week Training for Maastricht

Valentin Clavairolles

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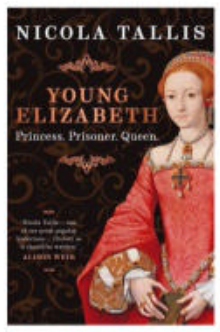

Young Elizabeth: Princess. Prisoner. Queen
Nicola Tallis
(Michael O'Mara Books, £25)

HERE we are, barely two months into a new year, and it's apparently time for yet another 16th-century blockbuster. Clearly, there is no end to our appetite for books on the Tudors. This time, Nicola Tallis offers us an 'immensely detailed biography', but it is one with a difference. Her subject is not Elizabeth the Queen, but Elizabeth the child, the teenager and the determined young woman.

It was a contemporary of Elizabeth, Jane Dormer (d.1612), who noted: 'To write all that might be said of her would fill many volumes.' Well, generations of authors have certainly been trying to do just that. Here, the author covers the years 1533–58, telling us that it was David Starkey who last looked at Elizabeth's youth, more than 20 years ago. Understandably, there is a degree of overlap with other works of popular Tudor history, such as those of Alison Weir and Tracy Borman. Dr Tallis, nevertheless, ploughs her own furrow and she does it very well.

Elizabeth was born in September 1533 to Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. By her third birthday, her mother had been brutally executed and she had been legally declared a bastard. Indeed, as the author tells us, being tainted with the stain of illegitimacy would long remain Elizabeth's Achilles' heel. The picture Dr Tallis then paints of a young child desperately seeking to ingratiate herself with a larger-than-life father and searching for family stability is sensitive and touching.

The author is especially good at charting the nuances in the teenage Elizabeth's encounters with the predatory Thomas Seymour (d.1549), who had married her much-loved stepmother, Katherine Parr (d.1548). Similarly, she adopts an even hand in considering the extent to which Elizabeth knew of the anti-Spanish (Wyatt) rebellion of early 1554, but reminds us that this highly intelligent young woman was simply 'too clever to incriminate herself'.

To say that the 25-year-old Elizabeth had already endured a life of hardship and struggles by the time of her accession in 1558 would be something of an understatement. The story is undeniably remarkable. All in all, with considerable insight and skill, Dr Tallis presents us with more than enough evidence to argue that Elizabeth's 'early experiences shaped not only the young woman she was, but the Queen she would become'.
David Robinson

The Virgin Queen: but Elizabeth fought hard to reach the throne

> 'Courage is one thing in a body of men on the battlefield, quite another in a lone female body'

I Am Not Afraid of Looking into the Rifles: Women of the Resistance in World War One
Rick Stroud
(Simon and Schuster, £22)

WE now know a good deal about women behind the lines in the Second World War—SOE couriers and agents, Resistance fighters, spies and everyday people who helped escapees or downed aircrew. Less well known are those of the First World War. Rick Stroud, who wrote about the women of SOE in his aptly titled *Lonely Courage* (2017)—for courage is one thing in a body of men on the battlefield, but quite another in a lone female body—has now redressed the balance with this equally appropriately named book.

The words are those of one of his eight chosen heroines: Gabrielle Petit, a Belgian 'saleswoman' who, when she was taken to face a firing squad in 1916 said also: 'I am going to show you Germans that a Belgian woman knows how to die.' Only at the last moment did she relent about the blindfold, when the priest accompanying her said: 'Let nothing disturb your thoughts of Heaven.'

Mr Stroud begins with perhaps the most famous of all: Nurse Edith Cavell. Her execution for aiding soldiers to evade capture was a spectacular own goal. The *New York Times* wrote: 'Every Neutral Nation has heard with a shock of horror the news of the execution of Miss Cavell. The world at large prays that Germany's enemies may triumph.'

The Kaiser ordered that no more women were to be executed without his approval. He then proceeded to give it often enough. One wonders, had he been handed over after fleeing to the Netherlands in 1918, would he have been arraigned for war crimes? The women were charged with treason, many having monitored German troop-train movements—a huge operation coordinated by the British and French intelligence services—but how might a Belgian-, French- or English-woman be charged with treason against an invader?

The author concludes his minutely detailed, moving and inspiring book with a challenge: 'The people I have written about show what the individual can do when faced with apparently overwhelming odds. In so doing they set a very high moral standard for us all to live up to.' They do, indeed, but why is the execution of a woman in wartime so much more abhorrent than the execution of a man? I myself am perfectly clear about it, but I wonder: is that supposition shared as much today as it was then?
Allan Mallinson

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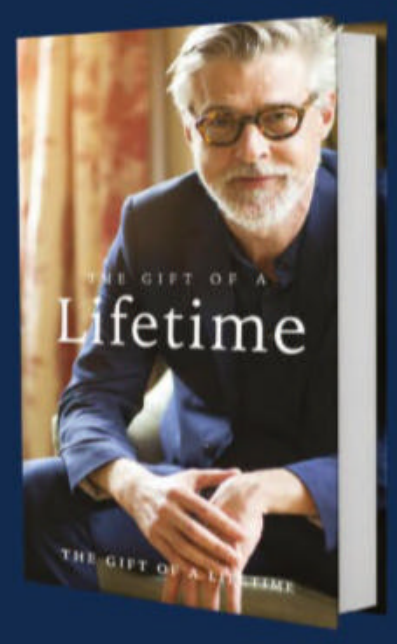

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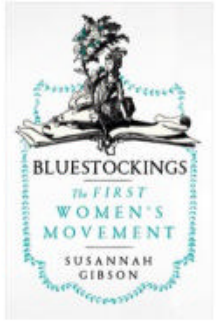


Bluestockings: The First Women's Movement
Susannah Gibson
(John Murray, £25)

IN the 2008 publication *Brilliant Women: 18th-Century Bluestockings*, which accompanied the National Portrait Gallery exhibition, the curators and co-authors Lucy Peltz and Elizabeth Eger observed: 'From Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Germaine Greer, influential women have lamented their lack of foremothers. But why has the remarkable group of creative and intellectual women who flourished in 18th-century Britain been overlooked?' Good question.

Their work introduced to a public Elizabeth Montagu, instigator and leader of the 'Bluestocking' salons—'where like-minded men and women met from the 1750s onwards to debate contemporary ideas and promote the life of the mind'—the classicist Elizabeth Carter, author and Arts patron Hester Thrale and novelist Fanny Burney among many others.

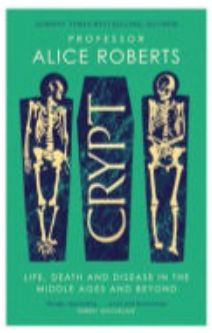
The Bluestocking salons promoted debate of contemporary ideas

A few years earlier, the great Beryl Bainbridge had brought to the fore one of these brilliant women in her Booker-longlisted biographical novel, *According to Queeney*, in which the ageing Dr Samuel Johnson struggles with his love for Mrs Thrale, as recalled by her daughter, the eponymous narrator. If in 2024 the bluestockings are 'forgotten', as stated on the inside cover of Susannah Gibson's new book, it is not for want of trying.

This is a deft and appealingly written group biography framed by the life of Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800). As signalled by its subtitle, Dr Gibson aims to present these middle-class and elite women as self-consciously radical, the precursors, perhaps, of the late-19th-century Suffragist movement. Certainly, the author considers 'the women who attended the salons were pushing back against the patriarchy' and their very attendance 'set something in motion. Their actions would have ramifications across society. Quietly, they would help to create a new world for women'.

Although the Bluestockings—named from the leg-wear worn by the absent-minded botanist and salon regular Benjamin Stillingfleet—would inspire genuine radicals such as Mary Wollstonecraft, the reaction in Britain to the French Revolution and its aftermath put paid to any major societal shift in favour of women.

The term 'bluestocking' changed from a whimsical badge of honour and pride to one of derision and belittlement. Lest we forget, within two decades of Montagu's death, members of the Manchester Female Reform Society were among those attacked with sabres at the pro-democracy meeting dubbed 'Peterloo'. *Plus ça change.*
Jacqueline Riding



Crypt: Life Death and Disease in the Middle Ages and Beyond
Alice Roberts
(Simon & Schuster, £22)

THE stories in this book are not comforting tales,' warns Alice Roberts in her introduction. This reviewer must admit to feeling uneasy, although not because of all the details of plague, leprosy and syphilis, among many other unpleasant ways to die, which all make for perfectly riveting reading, but, rather, because it feels as if it was written in a hurry and in response to a marketing brief, padded with sometimes rambling contextual information that distracts the reader from the truly fascinating case studies. This is a pity as Prof Roberts is an engaging academic and broadcaster who loves and knows her stuff.

Crypt is the third in a series of books that began in prehistory with *Ancestors* (a more focused narrative that struck the right balance between chatty television-presenter breeziness and scholarly enthusiasm) and continued with *Buried* into the first millennium. These look at what we can tell about the undocumented past by examining the way in which people were buried, but *Crypt* focuses more specifically on disease and injury and how scientific advances can help us understand both the cause and context of a person's death.

The seven case studies offered here by Prof Roberts include the site of an Anglo-Saxon massacre in Oxford, a leper hospital outside Winchester and a plague pit in Lincolnshire. Two are 'cold cases' revisited: St Thomas Becket's elusive bones and the remains of those who went down with Henry VIII's favourite ship, *Mary Rose* in 1545. The last one is the curious tale of a syphilitic anchoress from York who died in the mid 15th century.

A 17th-century doctor with mask treats bubonic plague

Prof Roberts carries the reader with her, out to the mournful burial sites then back to the labs. Many questions are left hanging, but there are some satisfying conclusions. She reports on the latest international experiments providing supporting evidence that the crack archers on *Mary Rose* had sustained rotator-cuff disease through the practice of their deadly skill.

There are some jarring personal observations, but she is good at explaining complicated science clearly—how you extract genetic information from tooth enamel and relating how the analysis of ancient genomes can tell us not only about the circumstances in which people died, but can inform our understanding of diseases today, in the case of the plague, for example, or Paget's Disease, with its still mysterious origin in north-west England.
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Crossword

A prize of £25 in book tokens will be awarded for the first correct solution opened. Solutions must reach Crossword No 4819, Country Life, 121–141 Westbourne Terrace, Paddington, London, W2 6JR, by **Tuesday, March 5**. UK entrants only

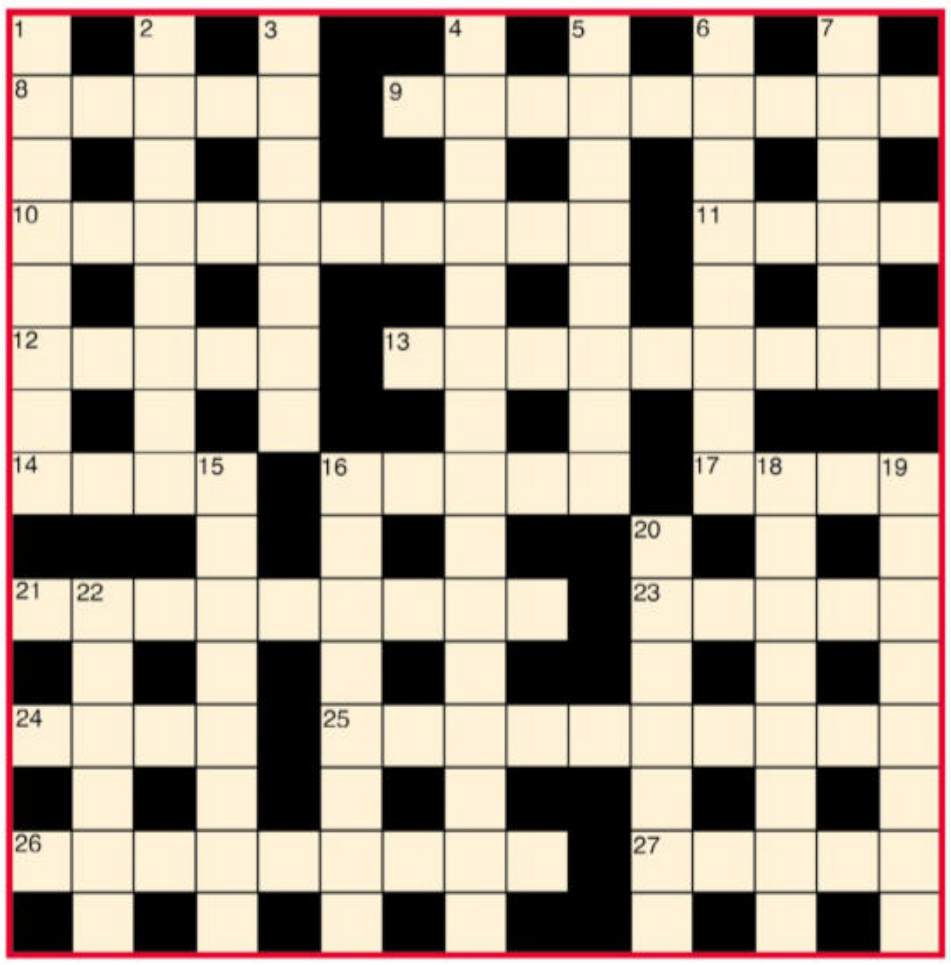
ACROSS

8 Talk of medal for host (5)
9 Claimed in alternative healing (9)
10 Humiliation that less fun to explore French street (10)
11 New herb (4)
12 Accustom first interns newly using recent equipment (5)
13 Able to take everything is main thing when going along waterway (9)
14 Staunch branch (4)
16 I take shelter in brouhaha (5)
17 Rabble right to abandon rugby group (4)
21 Drink for example good to accompany food (6,3)
23 King of Northumbria to gain writer (5)
24 Obscure band (4)
25 Attempts to place floor covering in entrances (10)
26 Killer rifled through my arsenal (9)
27 Musician is lead part in seaside attraction (5)

DOWN

1 Close shave when point attention to girl (4,4)
2 He's clued in to plan (8)
3 Puzzled that source of inspiration is asleep (7)
4 Gang let out beavered away in cultivated land (9,6)
5 Wrongly place emphasis in buckle (8)
6 Rewards for high fliers? (3,5)
7 Lady in fleece has bit for horse (6)
15 Driver would love to crest hill in fog (8)
16 Mothers hide headgear from sages (8)
18 Lower garments are bloomers (8)
19 Test cars for clergy (8)
20 Socialist record of bureaucracy (3,4)
22 Wine store merchant reported (6)

4819 **TAIT**



SOLUTION TO 4818

ACROSS: 4, Twitcher; 5, Sombrero; 9, Kansas; 10, Come to pass; 11, Ocelot; 12, Demerara; 15, Premiere; 16, Material; 21, Embitter; 22, Tiptop; 23, Allegiance; 26, Ladies; 27, Friction; 28, Reinvest. DOWN: 1, Colonel; 2, Oboe; 3, Removal; 4, Toga; 5, Irksome; 6, Convenient; 7, Enamour; 13, Equestrian; 14, Apple; 17, Agitate; 18, Impasse; 19, Abigail; 20, Reactor; 24, Lift; 25, Arty.

The winner of 4817 is Iona Roberts, Edinburgh

Bridge Andrew Robson

OUR Loser-on-Loser series continues with a challenge to make Six Hearts on the two of Diamonds lead, East's overcalled suit.

Dealer North
Neither Vulnerable

	♠ 743 ♥ A32 ♦ KJ76 ♣ KJ5	
♠ K962 ♥ 10 ♦ 10852 ♣ 8642	N W+E S	♠ J108 ♥ 97 ♦ AQ943 ♣ 1097
	♠ AQ5 ♥ KQJ8654 ♦ - ♣ AQ3	

South	West	North	East
		1♣(1)	1♦(2)
2♥	3♦(3)	3♥	Pass
6♥	End		

1) Playing Strong Notrump and opening all balanced hands One Club—as per many modern experts.
2) Sliding in the lead-director.
3) Competing to the (nine-card) level of the fit.

You have 11 top tricks and will make 12 easily enough if East has the King of Spades. Therefore, assume West has that King. East will hardly overcall One Diamond on a picture-less five-card Diamond suit 'and out'—so you can place East with the Ace-Queen of Diamonds.

Don't waste dummy's Knave of Diamonds at trick one. Play instead the six, ruffing away East's nine. Now cash the King of Hearts, cross to dummy's Ace (drawing trumps) and lead a diamond picture, say the King. You ruff away East's Ace, then cross to the Knave of Clubs to lead the Knave of Diamonds, ruffing away East's Queen. West may unblock the ten on this trick, but to no avail as he has the eight, the only card beating dummy's remaining seven.

You cash the Ace of Clubs, lead the Queen to dummy's King, and now advance the seven of Diamonds, discarding a Spade as East plays low. West wins the eight, but is endplayed. You can ruff a Club return in dummy as you shed the Queen of Spades from hand. In practice, West will lead a Spade (knowing the ruff-and-discard is fatal, so having to hope East holds the Queen of Spades). However, it is you who wins the Queen and claims your slam.

West is left to wish he'd led the eight (or ten) of Diamonds at trick one, after which there is no way to succeed.

On our second Six Heart slam, West leads the ten of Clubs. Can you avoid relying on the Diamond finesse?

Dealer South
Both Vulnerable

	♠ 3 ♥ AKJ10973 ♦ 852 ♣ K8	
♠ Q974 ♥ 82 ♦ K943 ♣ 1094	N W+E S	♠ K865 ♥ 64 ♦ J107 ♣ QJ65
	♠ AJ102 ♥ Q5 ♦ AQ6 ♣ A732	

South	West	North	East
1NT(1)	Pass	2♦(2)	Pass
2♥(2)	Pass	3♠(3)	Pass
4NT(4)	Pass	5♥(5)	Pass
5NT(6)	Pass	6♣(7)	Pass
6♥	End		

1) 15-17.
2) Transfer bid, duly completed.
3) Self-agreeing splinter, showing six (or more) Hearts and slam interest with a singleton (or void) Spade.
4) Loving the hand—with its three Aces and Queen of partner's Hearts—South can take charge, trotting out Roman Key Card Blackwood.
5) Two of 'five Aces'; no Queen of Hearts.
6) Confirming all the key cards and inviting a grand slam.
7) Cheapest King.

Here's the correct line that guarantees the slam, regardless of the location of the black-suit pictures, provided West has two, three or four Clubs. Win the King of Clubs and cash the Ace of Hearts. Now lead a Club to the Ace (necessary to do this before drawing trumps as you need the Queen of Hearts re-entry). Ruff a third Club (high), cross to that Queen of Hearts (drawing trumps, but an uneven Heart split would be no big deal) and ruff the fourth Club.

The scene is set. Lead a Spade to the Knave. (Note, if East has the King-Queen and splits, win the Ace and return the Knave, shedding a Diamond from dummy, soon able to discard another Diamond on the promoted ten of Spades.) West wins the Queen of Spades but has only Spades and Diamonds to lead. A Diamond runs to the Ace-Queen while a Spade runs to the Ace-ten. Slam made.

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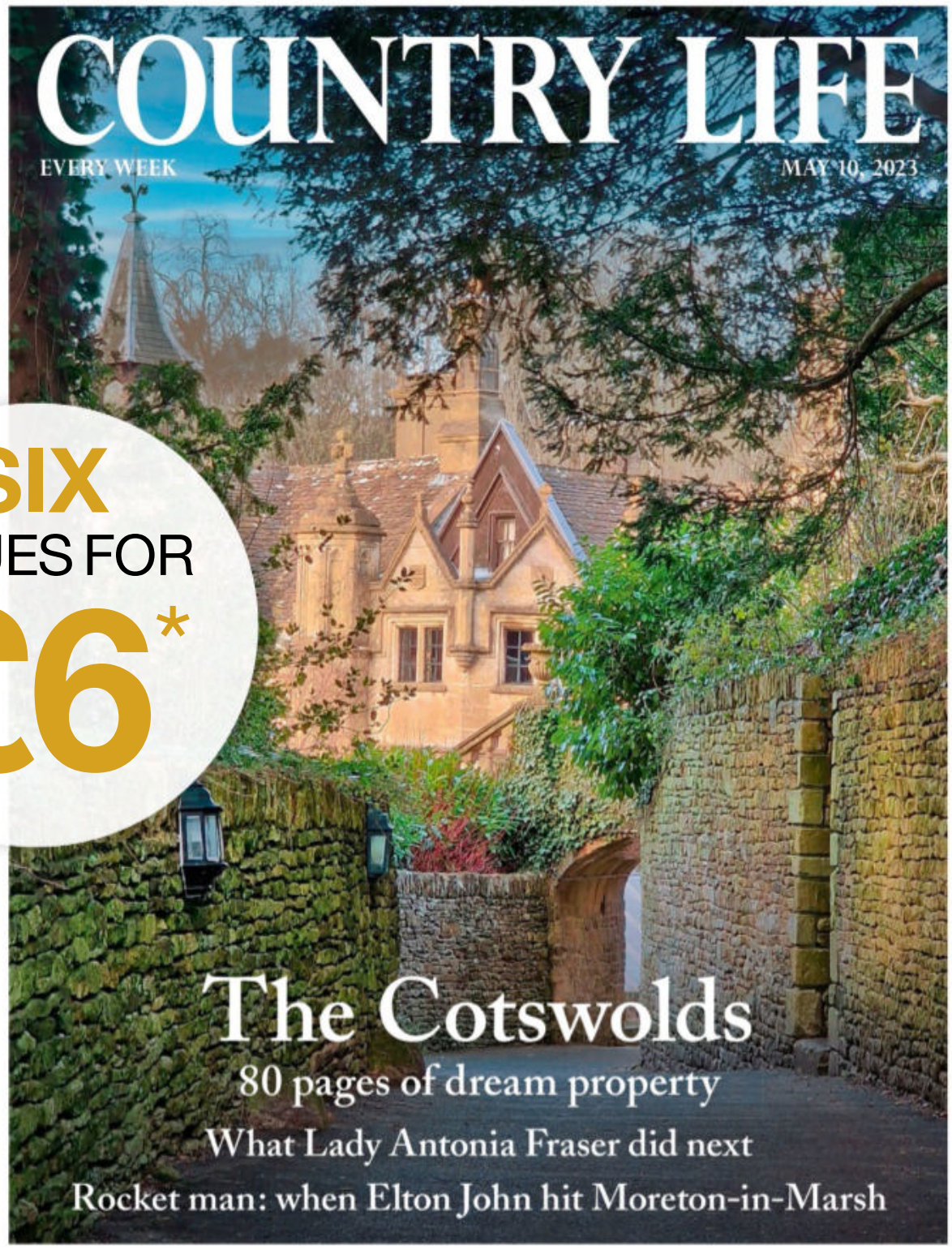

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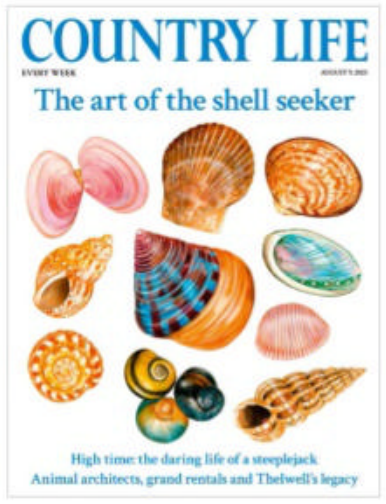
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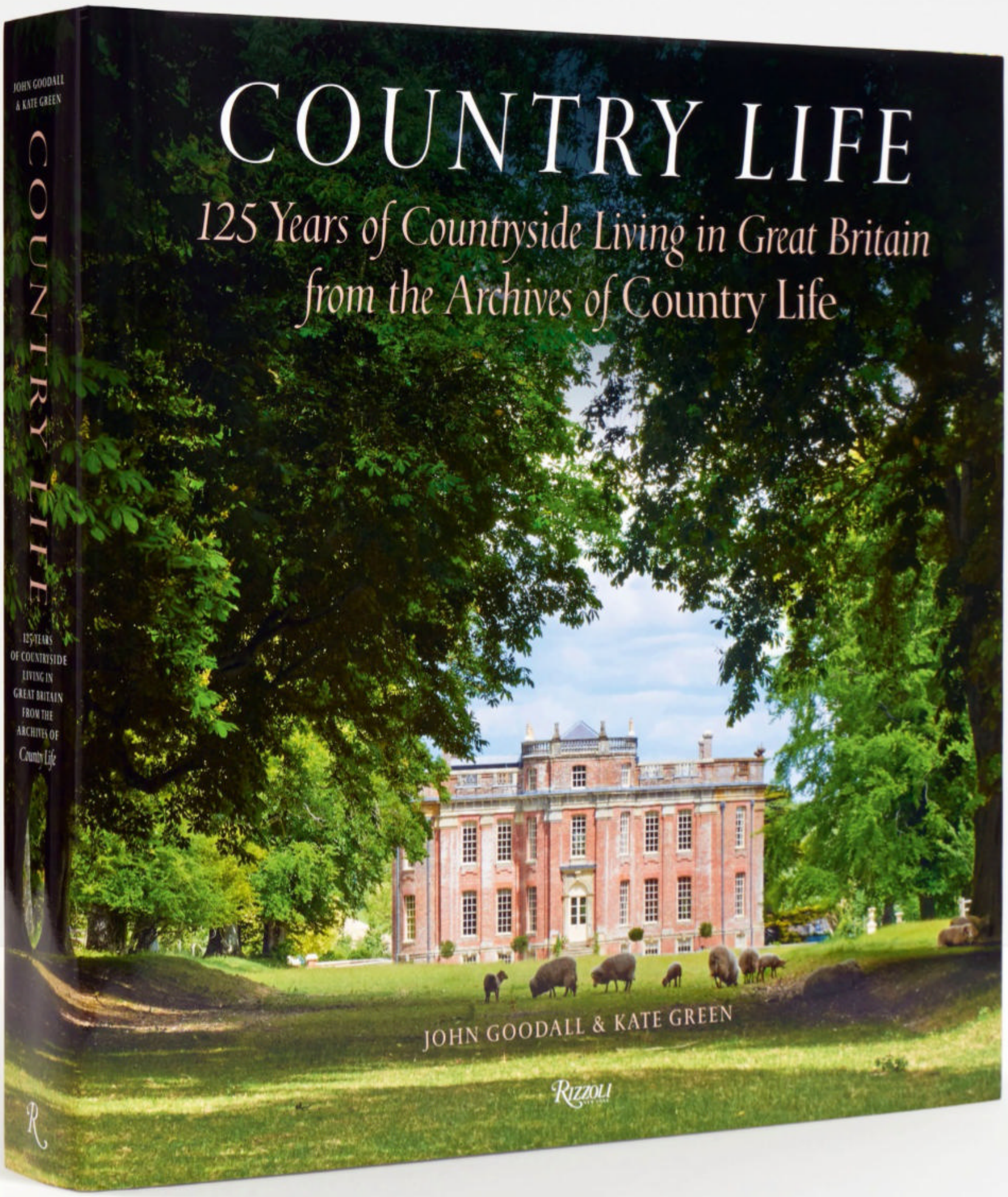

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by private collector.
Yorkshire based but can collect nationwide.

Hogarth prints *(pictured)*.
Boydell or earlier. Gillray, Cruickshank, Rowlandson and similar.

Georgian kitchen and domestic items.
Pre-Victorian, early iron kitchen range, grate, spit jack and smoke jack *(pictured)*.
Fireplace tools. Georgian silver/pewter chamber pots

Pre-1840 fire surrounds. Prefer marble, but wooden considered. Plain, humble versions for bedrooms etc also. Georgian architectural curiosities; staircases, unusual doors, over door pediments etc.
Victorian brass fire grate as pictured.

Georgian/ Regency/ William IV furniture.
Items with stamped makers' names or paper labels, eg Wilkinson, Robert James of Bristol, George Speer, Morgan & Sanders, George Oakley, Minter and Robert Daws (reclining chairs), Henry Kettle and dozens of others.
Chairs, bookcases, Davenports, beds, tables of all kinds etc.
Chamber horse exercise chair.

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Luxury Life

~ WANTED ~

VINTAGE WRISTWATCHES

Rectangular Rolex Princes from 1930s. Silver, gold or steel. Rolex Prince pocket watches *(pictured)*

Tudors. Steel or gold.

Traditional plain gold Rolex and Omega simple 1950s/60s long service/ retirement watches.

Omega Seamasters and pre-1980s Omegas in general.

Jaeger LeCoultres, all styles. Looking for Reversos.and Duoplans from 1930s. 1960S Geomatic and Memovox alarms.

IWC most models. 1960s Ingenieurs always wanted.

Breitling Top Times *(pictured)*, Daytoras, Navitimers and 24 hour dial Cosmonautes.

1920s/30s Rolex Oysters, cushion and octagonal *(pictured)*. Other pre-war Rolex models. Gold or silver/ steel. Also World War I Rolex trench watches.

Longines, Zeniths, pre-1970. Even basic steel models in nice condition.

Early, pre-war ladies' watches also wanted by Rolex, Omega, Jaeger LeCoultre etc. Prefer 1920s/30s deco styles, but all considered.

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Joe Gibbs

Are you listening, St Mungo?

ANGLERS will have noticed that St Mungo, patron saint of salmon, is asleep on the job. He has slipped into the ranks of saints 'who from their labours rest'. Unlike hard-grafting St Anthony, whom my wife keeps busy in search of lost mobiles and car keys (with a 90% retrieval rate), Mungo has been lollygagging by the rivers of paradise. Meanwhile, his ward, the Atlantic salmon, has been red-listed as an endangered species. A bit of saintly sock pulling up is needed.

On a dank and misty February Saturday, I joined a line of 4x4s crawling along the north side of the River Beauly to mark the opening of the fishing season. The track was flooded in places after heavy rainfall and a big river ran, barely contained by the banks. We passed the Priest's Pool, named for its former reservation to the occupant of the Roman Catholic clergy house in Beauly; many a priestly rod tip must have bent to the novenas offered up from these bosky banks in days when St Mungo was on the case.

Next to it was the Minister's Pool. Here, the estate owners had hedged their bets by making an identical concession to the Church of Scotland. Prayers to the saints being heretical on this stretch, fishing success would have been dictated by Calvinistic grim determinism. No doubt records will show which of these fishers of men had the ear of the Almighty.

Fifty members of Beauly Angling Club had gathered outside a fishing hut, more in hope than expectation of the new season. For the first time since its origins during the last war, the club drew a blank in 2023. Not a single salmon was landed the length of seven miles of river and 10 pools. The rest of the river had its lowest catch ever outside the years of wars and of hydro-dam construction.

In the absence of St Mungo, the opening ceremony had more of a pagan feel to it. The Picts, after all, worshipped rivers as deities. The pipes played and a quaich of sacrificial malt was tipped into troubled waters. We downed a dram and the first cast across the river was made, very prettily, by a Spey-casting teacher.

> 'During 2023, not a single salmon was landed the length of seven miles of river and 10 pools'

Fishermen are by nature optimistic, but talking to club members, the mood was dour. Dedicated bailiffs, gillies and scientists do all they can to rescue stocks, but much of the problem rests at sea and in climate change, beyond their control. Rogue seals hunt in the Beauly between September and April, when they go back to the herring and sand eels in the firth. They come upriver on the tide and trap what fish there are against the walls of the dam. Obtaining a licence to cull seals has become all but impossible and, I kid you not, a Beauly gillie has a licence to fire paintballs in the vicinity of a rogue seal, but never at it. The seal, of course, smiles and carries on snacking on dwindling wild salmon.

My family fished the Beauly for many decades until the 1990s. In a quiet year, the estate factor would telephone with the voice of assurance to tell us to expect fish any moment. Huge shoals of salmon had been spotted in the Moray Firth, he averred, giving a wartime impression of binoculared Royal Observer Corps wardens in British Warm coats and tin hats in lookouts around the firth. It was nonsense of course, and we laughed, but then we knew the fish would be back the next year. St Mungo, in our hour of need…

Next week Jason Goodwin

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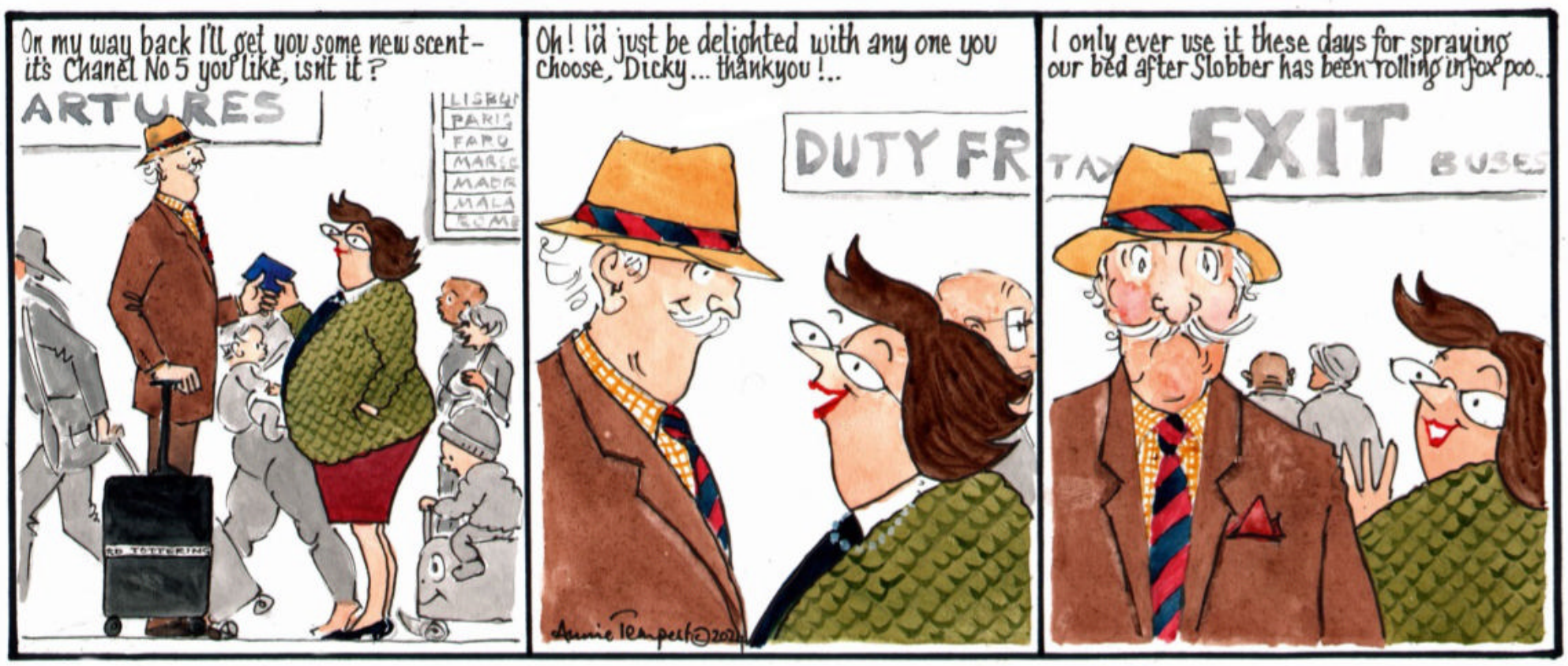

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